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ABSTRACT

This compilation presents material related to a Library Literacy program, which was designed to collect, publish, and distribute the writing of new adult readers and whose target audience was students, teachers, tutors and librarians involved in library-based literacy programs in Massachusetts. The first part of the compilation presents the final report and describes the program's goals, activities, budget, problems, and reactions from the target audience. The second item in the compilation presents a study of the "Need I Say More" journal that published the new adult readers' writing. Results of the study in the compilation indicated that the journal was well received by adult learners across the state and was fulfilling its mission of providing reading texts that are culturally relevant and interesting to adult readers. The compilation next presents a list of adult new writers contributing to the journal in 1989-1990. The compilation also includes three issues of the journal "Need I Say More" (Volume I Number 1, Spring 1988; Volume II Number 3, Fall 1989, and Volume III Number 1, Winter 1990). (RS)

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ED 379 602

LSCA TITLE VI SPECIAL PROJECTS

FINAL REPORT

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I. General Information

1. Public Library of Brookline
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   Brookline, MA 02146

2. Michael Steinfeld
   (617) 730-2360

3. Grant Number R167A90389

4. Grant amount awarded: $25,000
   Grant amount expended: $25,000

II. Narrative report

1. This project was designed to collect, publish and distribute the writings of new adult readers. Our target audience included students, teachers, tutors and librarians involved in library-based literacy programs.

As described in the grant application's plan of operation, the project's four major goals were:

1. To add to and significantly increase the body of literature produced by adult new writers, and to distribute this literature to libraries and library-based literacy programs throughout the Commonwealth of Masachusetts;
2. To encourage student writing and the concomitant development of skills and self-esteem of a wide variety of people, including women, racial and ethnic minorities and new immigrants;
3. To provide direct access to original, relevant and stimulating reading materials written by students in adult literacy programs, especially women, racial and ethnic

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minorities, immigrants, senior and handicapped citizens; and

4. To assist libraries to improve their services to new adult readers and to increase the number of new adult readers who use their services.

These goals were to be accomplished through four primary activities:

1. publishing a quarterly magazine of writings of new adult readers;
2. distributing the magazine to literacy programs throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
3. presenting a series of workshops and seminars for adult literacy program students, teachers and staff designed to encourage more student writing in existing literacy programs; and
4. holding a two day writers' conference for students and their teachers who are participants in adult literacy programs.

[Activities 1 and 2 were to be funded by an LSCA Title VI Library Literacy Program Grant and a Massachusetts Department of Education grant . Activities 3 and 4 were to be funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education grant.]

Our premise was that the availability of literacy materials written and published by new adult readers and writers would provide a useful alternative to the commercially produced literacy materials which so often fail to interest students

because of their dull content and sometimes condescending style. Many Boston adults who read poorly have begun to improve their skills through literacy instruction, but their progress has been hampered by a lack of stimulating, but simply written, reading material.

Furthermore, by publishing student writings and creating an audience for their work, students would be encouraged to write more. Adult literacy requires writing as well as reading, but teaching writing is all too often neglected in literacy education.

Our experience publishing a local magazine for adults who are new readers has shown that the writings of other adult learners make compelling reading, especially if the published writers live in an urban ethnic community, have faced obstacles similar to to those faced by their readers, and are, themselves, literacy students.

James Emmanuel Roberts (Kona Khasu), a published poet and playwright who has worked as a high school and adult basic education teacher, has coordinated this project since its beginnings in 1988. As Project Coordinator, he was responsible for the project's actual accomplishments. During the LSCA Title VI grant period, Mr. Roberts:

(Public awareness)

1. visited 14 literacy programs in the Boston/Brookline area [ABCD Learning Center; Brookline Adult & Community Education Program; Cape Verdean Community House; Cardinal Cushing

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Center; East Boston Harborside Community School; Haitian Multi-Service Center; Hebrew College; Jackson/Mann Community School; Jamaica Plain Community Schools; Jefferson Park Writing Center; Mujeres Unidas en Accion; Scale; WAITT House; WEAVE/Women] to invite teachers and students to participate in the Publishing for Literacy project.

2. recruited and trained 12 adult literacy students to serve on the magazine's editorial committee;

3. published two issues of Need I Say More, and compiled additional student writings to produce two future issues;

4. distributed copies of Volume II Number 3 and Volume III Number 1 of Need I Say More to 23 library-based literacy programs and more than 200 public libraries in Massachusetts;

5. organized a new writers' weekend (May 18 - 20, 1990) for literacy students participating in writing programs;

6. sponsored a "Writer-in-the-Classroom" series in which new adult writers visited literacy programs to read from their works and encourage student writing; and

7. conducted a monthly series of two-hour "Adult New Writers' Forums" that brought adult new writers together to share their work through reading aloud and discussion.

2. Our budget request proposed covering $19,500 (60%) of the project coordinator's salary and $5,500 (70%) of the production, printing and distribution costs of four issues of Need I Say More. A grant from the Massachusetts Department of Education was expected to cover the remaining program costs. Because of the overlapping fiscal years covered by these grants, and delays in

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printing, the LSCA Title VI grant actually paid $22,944 of the project coordinator's salary, and $2,056 in production and distribution costs. All printing costs and the new writer's conference costs were paid for from other grants. Some student writings produced during the second half of the grant period will be published during the first three months of 1991. When published, credit for support will be given to the Library Literacy Program.

3. We were surprised and gratified by the positive impact that writing for - and being published in - Need I Say More had on the lives of many participants in the program. The Public Library of Brookline hosted a celebration to honor the 66 adult new writers contributing to Need I Say More during the 1989/90 publishing cycle. Several literacy students read aloud from their writings. Proud family, friends, teachers and fellow-students were visibly moved by the courage and the accomplishments of these new adult readers and writers.

We have received letters of interest from literacy programs across the United States, letters of thanks from literacy students and teachers, and letters of support from public librarians. (Copies of typical letters are appended to this report.) Magazines and newspapers, including the Boston Globe, published articles about the project. Local newspapers in Jamaica Plain, Brookline, Allston, Brighton, the South End and South Boston wrote about new adult writers from their communities who were published in Need I Say More.

The Adult New Writers' Weekend enabled students in participating

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literacy programs to spend a weekend devoted to writing and talking about writing. An entire issue (Volume III Number 2, Summer 1990) of Need I Say More is comprised of writing produced during that weekend.

The project's problems were mostly logistical - e.g. finding times for the editorial committee to meet and getting printers to produce work on schedule. These problems led to fewer issues of the magazine being published and delayed distribution dates, but did not diminish the enthusiasm or productivity of the program's student writers. All writings produced during the grant period will be published in future issues of Need I Say More and will be distributed to library-based literacy programs. Credit for support will be given to the LSCA Title VI program.

4. The Publishing for Literacy project has achieved its primary goals. It has benefited many new adult readers and writers, has stimulated writing activities in Boston area literacy classes, and has provided libraries and library-based literacy programs with new, useful reading material for their students.

Adult Literacy Resource Institute staff developed a questionnnaire to see how Need I Say More was being used by literacy students, and what changes in design or content might improve its effectiveness. The questionnaire report (copy appended) indicated that literacy students wanted to see more graphics in Need I Say More, and wanted to read more information about the writers. Teachers and students were divided on the questions of non-English entries and the use of non-standard

English by some student writers. The Advisory Committee and the Editorial Committee will keep these concerns and all of the report's suggestions and observations in mind as future issues of the magazine are produced. The questionnaire identified an additional problem of students not being allowed to take the magazine home. This can easily be solved by providing additional copies to literacy classrooms.

The report concluded that issues of Need I Say More "are being well received by adult learners across the state and are fulfilling their mission of providing reading texts that are culturally relevant and interesting to adult readers. They also support the development of writing skills because the readers get stimulated to write themselves and wish to share their writings."

We plan to seek public and private funds to continue publishing Need I Say More in cooperation with the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, and look forward to having new adult published writers celebrate their recently acquired literacy skills by reading in public for the first time at the Public Library of Brookline.

In October of 1989 three community-based programs throughout Massachusetts were contacted to be sites to answer a questionnaire about how the Need I Say More journals were viewed or used by adult learners in those programs. The intent was to find out what they were reading , if they liked what they were reading, why or why not. In addition the Publishing Project also wanted to find out information about the format of the journals: Were they appealing?, Did they need more graphics?, More selections?, etc. With all these ideas/questions in mind, I designed an initial questionnaire and selected three sites that corresponded to the areas where workshops had been conducted the previous year. The three areas were Boston, the western region (Northampton) and the Northeast region (Lawrence). Workshops had been conducted in those areas to introduce teachers in the field of adult education to the journals and how and why they might consider using them in their classrooms to teach reading and writing (see other reports for more details).

This was the initial plan. The questionnaires would serve as a kind of follow-up to the workshops. However this time the perspective would be from the students not the teachers. To ensure that the questionnaires would be given the attention they need, the Publishing Project agreed to offer an honorarium to the participating programs and their students. It was suggested that this money go towards producing an in-house publication or hosting an author's night.

The three sites contacted were the Jackson Mann Community School in Allston (Boston area), the ESL Program at Northern Essex Community College in Lawrence (Northeast Region), and the Care Center in Holyoke (Western Region). The teachers in the program in Lawrence felt they could not participate in the project because they felt the selections were too difficult for their student's level. In January the teacher in the ABE program in Boston said the questionnaires had been lost and she couldn't find them and that the students were gone so it would be impossible to do them again. So in January of 1990, I contacted the International Language Institute in Northampton to see if any of the ESL teachers there would be interested in participating. Two teachers expressed interest. One teacher worked with a student individually and was able to get writings from that student about which pieces she enjoyed reading and why. This writing was produced in addition to the questionnaire. The other teacher worked with ESL students in a SLIAG program in Springfield. Her students participated in the project as part of their reading work in the class. Other teachers at the Instiutute including those teaching international students have used the journals as readers in their classes. These changes in the initial plan are mentioned because they indicate reasons why the report was delayed and why the results are not as encompassing as planned.

This report will provide feedback on the two centers that did participate in filling out the questionnaires. The two centers were the Care Center in Holyoke and the International Languaguage Institue in Northampton. The total number of students surveyed was 18. In addition to the questionnaires an oral interview was conducted with the poetry writing teacher at the Care Center.

This report will focus on the following items:

How the questionnaire was designed and implemented

Profile about the students

Which volumes were read and which pieces

Organization of the books

Missing themes

Use of nonstandard English

Writings in other languages (not English)

Sharing the journals

Writing produced as the result of reading the journals

One student's critique of the journals

Report on Mattie Wheeler's visit to the Care Center

Summary Comments

How the questionnaire was designed and implemented

The first step in designing the questionnaire was to meet with James Emmanuel Roberts (JER)and agree upon the essential information we wanted to find out. The second was to preview existing questionnaires about journals to see what kind of format they used. I looked primarily at the questionnaire designed for Connections, another journal published at the ALRI. From them I borrowed the idea of asking each participant which volume or volumes they had read. In designing the questionnaire, I

assumed each participant would read at least one or two selections from each journal. I divided the questionnaire into 5 sections. The three sections were the following:

1. **About You**

2. **About the Journals**

3. **About the Writings**

4. **About the Thompson Island Issue**

5. **Other comments**

I separated questions about the journals and the writings so that we could get both a general global reaction to a volume and reactions to specific writings. This proved to be too sophisticated for the student participants and they ended up saying the same thing in both sections. I added a separate section on Thompson Isand because I was curious if students outside the Boston area could relate to the writings and because the format was different. I wanted to know if they preferred that format. The first section, **About You**, was added because I felt it was important to get information about who the participants were especially information about their nationality and level of English. I also thought it might be important to know if they read in English or their native language for pleasure and if so what kind of things did they read. The last section, **Other Comments,** was included because I wanted to know if they had learned anything from participating in this evaluation project. Part of my agenda and the teachers was to use this process of evaluation as a teaching tool to prepare them for thinking about the kind of in-house publication they wanted to publish and how it should be organized and laid-out.

After I had made a rough draft of the questionnaire, I took it back to the centers for feedback. I wanted to know if they thought their students could answer these questions. The only changes we made were to take out the lines I had put in for students to write their answers. Most of the teachers felt that a blank space was less intimidating. We also discussed various ways to ask the question about the use of standard English.

When the final draft was completed I gave it to programs with very little instructions on how to present it to their students. The result was that the International Institute answered it in class as a classroom activity at the end of their cycle while the Care Center girls did them individually at their own pace. These two different approaches, one supervised and the other not, had an effect on what the students wrote and how much they wrote. Next time I would write out instructions

for the teachers to make sure they follow the same procedures. (see appendix A for sample questionnaire).

Profile About the Students

Of the eighteen participants, there were only three males who participated. This is because the Care Center is a center for pregnant and parenting teens (all women). For the question about nationality, I got some interesting responses which indicate their must be a better way to get this information. Their responses included the following:

Spanish 2 America 3 Black American 1 Hispanic American 4

Indian 1 White 1 Colombian 1 Cuban 1

Polish 2 Puerto Rican 1

The majority of the group also indicated they were at an intermediate level of English with some of the Care Center indicating they were in grade 12. Only one student said her English was low.

All of the students said they read in their native language and about 90% said they liked to read in English. Under what kind of things they like to read in English, they included the following: newspapers, science fiction, murder mysteries, love stories, children's books, modern romances, comics, letters, puzzles, poetry, stories, magazines, best sellers, and astrology books. Under what kinds of things do they usually read in their native language, they included: news from the world, newspapers and letters. The discrepancy between these two lists I believe reflects both the teens interests (romance stories) and maybe how much is available to them in their native language.

Which Volumes Were Read and Which Selections

It appears that most of the students read volume I, No. 1 and Vol. I, No.2. A few read Vol.II, No. 2 and some read volume II, No. 1. It is not clear if this was due to the students' choice or because this is what the teachers gave them. Each center had 4 copies of each volume. To best get the flavor of what they felt about these volumes I am going to quote the students' comments on each volume.

Volume I, No.1

The way the people in these writings express themselves It makes me understand my own feelings.

Some articles are written in spanish. Hay Un Algo. I like it because it speaks about a beautiful word "amor". I like everything.

Because the people who were writing these began the study of English like me.

I like it because the stories were pretty great. Some of the writings were too hard because my vocabulary is poor.

Because the way it was done. I like it also because really emoton story.

Nice order words of other people feelings

Mattie Wheeler- Who am I?

Volume I, No.2

These writngs are all true and interesting because they talk about life on this earth.

What I like about is make by people like me.

Talked about childhood and what she said.

Sabria Gomez life. because it is real story,. no fiction.

My sister and I are very different because the way it ended because they love each other.

Because is poetries. I love poetry and nice organize.

Volume II, No. 1

It is great.

little children who pushers kill becaue they shouldn't be n o drugs.

becaue it deals with life today and all the kids with drugs and no home and no family and how the streets take them

It was love at first sight Daniel Green

Sharon Young Little Black Boy and Little White Boy

Volume II, No.2

I like it because these poetries about feelings and dreams

poems very good

Because it was very interesting and every story was different

Because it talk about the reality of how everyday people can relate too.

My father the drunk. because I have the same problem with my father but I love him.

Humberto Avedano: Solo Entonces becaue its deep. Charles Young Black Woman the way he describes women.

Organization of the Books

The main comment from both the oral interview with the teacher at the Care Center and how students responded on the questionnnaire was that they wanted to see more graphics. As one student wrote, "*To get more details or know who is the person writng at least see who she or he is in the picture.*" Another student commented that they (the journals) need more color.

In addition the girls at the Care Center wanted more information about the authors and noted that only one issue had contributors's notes. And these they felt were not informative enough. Another student commented that the journals needed more pages which I take to mean they wanted more writings.

One of the most unusual comments was "*It resembles our work, country,language and our people.*"

The teacher at the Care Center said that because all the pieces were titled that this influenced the girls to want to title their own poems.

Missing Themes

The students from both programs had some very definite ideas about themes that were missing. The Care Center in particular felt that the theme of friendship was missing and that they had some writings they could contribute on this topic. Other students talked about the desire to see the following themes explored: citizenship, homelands, schools in America, government, children, countries, people, drugs and children. One student wrote that she wanted to see more about Mothers like on p.29 vol. II, No.1. Another said she would like to read about ' abusing women and children'.

Uses on Nonstandard English

The response to this question were mixed but the majority felt as one student put it, *"Just fine the way they are."* Some of the other responses were:

I learned from them.

Yes, I'm trying to learn English and sometimes I didn't understand what is said.

The mistakes should be missing in the book because when I will see a mistake I will correct that

It doesn't bother me if nonstandard English.

They are edited enough.

Writings in Other Languages (not English)

There were two questions that addressed the issue of language. They were: Do you like having writings in other languages other than English? (for example, volume I No.1 has writings in Spanish). If yes, should we continue to solicit writings in other languages? If yes, should these be translated? If yes, should they have direct translations or summaries?

It is important to remember when looking at these responses that the majority of the students who participated in this evaluation project were Spanish speaking and the

only writings that were translated were in Spanish. The two Polish students had different opinions. One wanted writings in Polish while the other one didn't. Two students said they just wanted to read in English. Other had definite ideas about translating. Their comments are listed below:

I want them translated word for word that way I can understand it

They should be translated. They should be direct translations.

Yes, because the Spanish speaking people can read them.

Well, I only read Spanish and English so it doesn't really matter.

Sharing the Journals

This question was added because I wanted to see if they shared the journals with others in their life outside of their program. Only a few students answered this question. Most said they shared the journal with family members. One student even said , "*Yes, with my sister because a very sad story.*" Many said they weren't allowed to take the journals home.

Writings Produced as The result of Reading the Journals

There was one question on the questionnaire that asked students if they had written something themselves as the result of their reading something in the journals. And if yes, what was it. Almost all of the students indicated they had written something. Their topics were varied however. One student said she had written a letter to Humberto telling him how much she liked his poems. Another said she wrote about her mother. Yet still another said he wrote about Cuba and his immigration.

At the Care Center the journals were used as part of a unit on poetry reading and writing. The teacher selected some writings while the class selected others. The teacher said it was about half and half. She selected half and they selected half. The books were put in the middle of the big table so they were easily accessible by all students. The teacher commented on how nice it was to have enough copies to go around. They began the poetry unit with one of Mattie Wheelers's poem, 'Who Am I?" She said she used this poem to spark a collective writing piece. Later she said students would chose a poem and the teacher would xerox it for everyone. Most of the poems the students selected were about romantic love or rejection or about children

following comment when asked about writing in her classroom which shed some light on the relationship between reading and writing. *"For some of the students who have been reluctant about producing poetry, they were not reluctant about reading it and they'll say I like this and they are comfortable reading it because it's not theirs."*

Before the evaluation project began another teacher at the Care Center used the play about Aids (written in Spanish) as a model of the kind of play they could write in English. They began by translating the play into English first so the teacher who only spoke English could understand then they wrote their own play based on the kind of dialogues they had had on the subject with their boyfriends.

At the International Language Institute in one of their Holyoke classes ,I had the good fortune to be there when two Vietnamese students were looking for something to read. I gave them one of the volumes which I knew contained a story about coming to America written by a Vietnamese woman. I thought they might relate to her experience. Instead of identifying with her experience they said that that wasn't at all how it was. When I asked them to explain they said they didn't have to escape or go to a camp or anything. They had no idea what she was talking about. My conclusion was that they were very young and were allowed to leave voluntarily (they were not boat refugees). Reading the other woman's story made them want to write their own story.

One Student's Critique of the Journals

At the International Language Institute one student decided to write her own critique of the journals. Rosita's wrote about particular writings she liked and explained why she liked them. She also wrote a letter of admiration to one of the writers in the Thompson Island issue . It is interesting that she wrote her letter in English eventhough both of them are Spanish speaking. See appendix B for the comments Rosita made. The letter she wrote is copied below:

Mr. Avendano

I come from P.R. and studey in Northampton at the International Language Institute. I read the book Need I Say More. I think that it's a good book and a great idea to write poems and publish a book. I read your poems and I think their poems are beautiful. My favorite poem was Solo Entonces. It was a great surprise for me when I read this poem because sometimes I have had the same idea. I hope when you receive my letter there are for you one stimulation. Continue with your poems because you are an artist. congratulation!

Sincerely,

Rosita Rodriquez

Mattie Wheeler's Visit to the Care Center

On March 7, 1990 Mattie Wheeler, one of Need I Say More's most prolific writers, visited the Care Center in Holyoke to talk about her writing on request by the girls and their teachers. During my interview with Sue, the poetry teacher, who used the jouranls extensively in her class, she told me how much the girls liked Mattie's writings. She told me they had read at least 4 of them and had a lot to say about them since they were about being a mother and about drugs, two topics the girls also had a lot to say about. I suggested that the center try and get Mattie to come out as part of the visiting writer's series. They called and she came out with JER.

I was not at the meeting but I have listened to the tape they made, read the writings the girls wrote about Mattie and interviewed Mattie herself. By all accounts from all parties it was a successful venture. As Mattie put it, "It was beautiful. They were very friendly. They wanted to know about me. Was it hard to start? How long did it take to write a story?" She also said they thought she had gone to college from reading *Who am I*. they couldn't believe she was like them going back to school in a GED program. Mattie said she was also pleased with the fact they thought she looked so young. They though she was 40.

In writings written after Mattie's reading at the Care Center, the girls wrote in Spanish about what they had thought she was going to be like based on her writing and what she was like after having met her. See Appendix C for examples of their writings and Mattie's comments about her experience. The general sentiment was that she is a wise woman who cares about others and has had some experience with drugs in her family and writes about it to warn others not to get involved.

Summary Comments

I would like to conclude by saying that I think this evaluation project has been a learning experience for everyone and not just the students. In the future if I were to design a questionnaire again I would make it much simpler and I would conduct more oral interviews with the students. However for a first time with a limited group of students, we have discovered some important information about the journals

The main point is that the journals are very interesting to adult learners outside the immediate Boston area for the same reasons they are popular in the Boston area because they are writngs written by students(like the learners themselves) on topics

of interest. Students reading the journals like the format of the journals as a whole but would like to see more graphics particularly photograhs of the writers. They would also like to know more about the contributors.

However what still remains unclear for me is whether or not the journal should continue to solicit writings in other languages besides English and how they should be dealt with (translated directly or summarized). The other issue is the use of non-standard English. It appears that students like teachers are split on this issue. Some have no problems with it while others want to see "correct" English.

To conclude I think it can be deduced from the questionnaire, the writings, and the interviews that the journals are being well received by adult learners across the state and are fullfilling their mission of providing reading texts that are culturally relevant and interesting to adult readers. They also support the development of writing skills because the readers get stimulated to write themselves and wish to share their writings.

Adult New Writers Contributing to Need I Say More
1989-1990

August, Michelet
Avendano, Humberto
Banks, Jo Ann
Barbosa, Norman
Burgos, Theresa
Cerenly, Kathyrn
Chen, shi Chu
Cherry, Ada
Coofu, Lillia
Cole, Shellee
Cox, Jr., Young Charles
Forde, Cicely
Francione, Daniel
Gaessler, Ray
Gatrey, Diane
Gomes, Sabrinna
Graves, Henry
Green, Daniel
Green, Tony
Hampton, Betty
Hairston, Mayumi
Hernandez, Maritz
Henson, George
Jimenez, Anna
John, Rebekah
Johnson, Cynthia
Johnson, Patricia
Joseph, Julie
Justice, Carolyn
Justice, Carolyn
Kanze, Elizabeth
Lebron, Adrieene
Lemieux, Helen
Lewis, Chester
Lopes, Elizabeth
Lopes, Rita
Mangino, Carnella
Matias, Isobel
Milius, Ronald
Munera, Omar

Phillips, Mennel
Rentas, Delfina
Roman, Gladys
Santana, Alma
Sequea, Alethia
Shelley, Barbara
Smith, Kathy
Ting, Sath
Torres, Carmen
Torres, Vivian
Thompson, Marie
Thompson, Pearl
Toledo, Zonia
Wheeler, Mattie
Whyte, Michael
Young, Sharon

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NEED I SAY MORE

A literary magazine of adult student writings

Volume One, Number One
Spring 1988

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PREFACE

These writings portray the honest efforts of authors to tell their stories in vivid images and descriptions that are refreshing, stimulating, and educating. This has always been the nature of creativity: struggling to tell a personal story as sincerely as his or her skills can afford. The authors included in this volume are no exception.

The works included in this publication reflect the vibrancy, immediacy, and variety of skill levels of adult literacy students. Some of these stories are written in English that might not be accepted as "standard English." Many reflect experiences with which the reader can easily identify. In the words of Mary Jo Hetzel of Jackson/Mann Community School (Allston/Brighton), "This project has been a breath of fresh air. . .It has effectively awakened students' interest in writing at all levels of ability. It has stimulated teachers to enliven the program and motivated all of us to approach the challenge of teaching writing in more creative ways than before."

It is our sincere hope that these pieces will give our readers the same feeling of excitement and inspiration. As you read this volume, leave yourself in the hands of these authors, and let them lead you to an undiscovered world peopled with characters you know but probably have not seen in the same light as they are presented to you in these writings.

The Editorial Committee

PART I

THE BIG DREAM WAS ALWAYS ALIVE

THE BIG DREAM WAS ALWAYS ALIVE

By Antonio Brum

My grandmother immigrated to the United States of America in 1978. Two years after she came to Somerville, she wrote my mother a letter making an invitation to me to come live with her in the United States.

When my mother received the letter and read it to me, I got so happy that I could not explain what I felt in that moment. I told my mother I wanted to go live with my grandmother because my friends who came from there told me how good it was. My mother really thought that it would be a good idea, but she had to talk with my father. She told my father and he said I was too young to go away from my parents. My mother told my father, "It is a great opportunity for him to go over there and his future is not as great in Portugal as it would be in the United States." My father said, "He is only ten years old, still too young." My mother came to me and said, "Your father said no because you are still too young to go away from us." I said, "Mom, I am not going to live alone. I am going to live with my grandmother. Over in Somerville I will have more opportunities than I have here, such as better education." "Tony," she said, "your father said no and that is it." I went to my room and I started crying. A week later my mother wrote my grandmother saying that I was not going to live with her because I was too young to go away from my parents.

A month later my mother received a letter from my grandmother saying that she did not understand why I was too young because I was going to go live with her, and she would take care of me. I asked my mother again and she said, "Tony, wait until next year. See how things go and then we will talk about this again." Six months later when I was twelve years old, my father got sick with cancer of the stomach and a month later he died. After my father died, I did not talk with my mother about my immigration because I was not going to leave my mother alone.

A month later, my uncle, who had been living in the United States for twenty years, wrote us asking if we wanted to live with his family. My mother asked me and my twin brother and sister if we wanted to live with our uncle. We said "yes" because life in Portugal was getting too difficult for us. My mother agreed with us and we wrote him saying that we

wanted to go live with him. He wrote us back and sent the papers. When my mother received the papers, we sent them to the American Consulate. A week later we received a letter from the consul saying that the application was approved.

Five years later, when I was eighteen years old, we received the papers to immigrate to the United States. We got here on January the 10th of 1986, and here we are with the big dream realized.

"IN GOD WE TRUST"?

By Etienne Gaston

Here, in the U.S., I have no problems. I'm living with my father who has no time to help me even to visit Boston. However, I have some friends who can help me assist mass, but I like to assist mass on Saturday evening and I like to assist mass in that church because I feel better each time I go there. With pleasure, I hear the Harmonium's sound in that basilica and God's songs or church's songs in English.

I feel better when I am alone in church, where nobody knows me. I want to stay alone when I pray to God and when I am in church, I don't want anybody to disturb me.

That's the right that I have going to church already alone. I am an adventurer. I like to visit and assist American mass at other religious places.

On the U.S. money, we see:

"In God we trust."

I wonder, are American people really believing in God?

Because in the church as: Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal, Church of God, Catholic, Jehovah or Yawei, we have already seen a very few people who are in majority strangers, not American. I wonder, when the first American money came to the world, if we could see on it instead:

"In this God we trust."

American money = God

It's my own point of view, how we consider the capitalist society where people have no time to assist mass, to celebrate the holy week, even the holy Thursday and Friday.

I wonder, where is the American God? In the American Constitution, there is an article about that, that the President of the U.S. must be a Christian. It's false when we consider the Nicaraguan war, Panama, Vietnam, Reagan sending 3,500 U.S. troops to Honduras, why? They sold arms in Iran and Pourtant:

"In God we trust."

Reagan already says: "God bless you." Why?

FASHION DESIGN

By Haig S. Babaian

My name is Haig Babaian. I am twenty-seven years old. I was born in Brighton, MA. I would like to be a fashion designer one day. It all started on October 22 in Monterey, California. I wanted something different for my birthday and it happened to be a spander suit.

Deborah Dominick, my wife to be, was going to make it for me and I wanted to pick out the colors. They were yellow, purple and blue. Deborah decided on a wonderful design but I did not know how good it would be. When it was done it was unbelievable. I was so happy!

I was so fascinated with it I decided to make a better design for myself. The first one was a Hawaiian tree print. My next suit was an unusual design. It had lightning bolts down the legs and the colors were blue and red. Then I began to expand my talents and made a corduroy two piece suit. I like creating new designs because it is a sense of accomplishment to me and makes me feel good too. I also like to do other things such as cooking, mechanics, and playing piano, wood working, and biking. One day I will have achieved my goal as a fashion designer.

CHRISTMAS

By Pat White

Of all the Christmases I can remember, this Christmas will be the one I will remember. It will be the first time I will address the cards and mail them off myself, and when I get some returns, this time I will read them, something I could not do before. I would like to thank the teachers at the ALP for this.

CHRISTMAS

By Thom Scrooge

It is my opinion that Christmastime is the worst time of the year unless you are in a business of your own. Go out and buy a tree–35 to 45 dollars. Go out and buy a pair of sneakers. The same 35 to 45 dollars no matter what you want. Today you will go broke, so tell those little brats the truth about that old fat man and save your money and be happy and just tell them hum bug.

P.S. While you are at it, tell them about that Tooth Fairy.

P.P.S. It cost me $1,500 this time.

HAY UN ALGO

By Angel Pagan

I was singing a beautiful song a few days before St. Valentine Day. This was in my teacher's house. The song I was singing talked about a beautiful feeling we have inside us. The title of this song is "Hay un algo." Something beautiful that each one of us has. That something is big like a sky, beautiful like a sea. Many times we need to explore ourselves to discover what is that something. Many times we dream and wake up with this feeling, but one day we find that something that we dream and wake up to and we understand that it is infinite, bigger than all, because that something is.....

L O V E .

WHO AM I

By Zona Johnson

Who am I, I'm black I know
I see it, I hear it, it even shows
But nobody knows who I really am
Because they just don't give a damn

They gave us names
John, Peter, and Sam
But that's not our names
Do you know who I am

I go unnoticed like the night
But daylight's coming and the problem's back
But why are you so scared of me
I did you no harm like you did me

I was carried to the shore on a great big
ship called Jesus written on its tip
Commanded by Sir John Hawkins 1555
And hardly a slave was left alive

There is pain in my heart
And fury in my mind
My body can no longer endure this pain inside

So please God calm this wrath I feel
Because everyone knows it isn't right to steal.

PAIN, PAIN, AND MORE PAIN

By Zona Johnson

Why is this pain so deep in me
Like the indians felt at wounded knee
Could it be we had a common cause
Or should I stop to think and pause

We both loved the great outdoors
Until it was taken by the boars
They raped our land and our people
Then they tried to teach us at their steeple

They taught us well I must agree
With God's own words they didn't set me free
Where is this key to open the door
Or must I go on forever more

They taught us self hate and that's the reason
Everything in its own time has a season

I'VE TRAVELLED THIS ROAD BEFORE

By Zona Johnson

I've travelled this road before
Four hundred years or more
You brought me to this desecrated shore
On a ship I thought was Noah

I seek only justice and peace of mind
And now I feel you're running out of time
So give me these things I ask of you
Because your downfall is near in view

I've always been in the shadow of man
And now it's time to make a stand
For equal rights and equality
Give me these things and set me free

So give us just a piece of this land
So I can make another stand
And protect this land I call my own
Because you worked me to the bone

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO GO

By David Jennings

It is nice to take a cruise.
I was recommended by a friend to take a cruise.
The food is great.
The weather is hot.
I sat at a table for 6.
I met a mother and son.
I went to a midnight buffet.
I wore a tuxedo.
I went to a cocktail party.
I played shuffleboard on deck.
I was listening to a steel band by the pool
while having a pina colada.
I was listening to the M.C.
I was shopping on the island.
I bought some jewelry.
I saw a tree uprooted.
The man showed us how he did the ice sculpture.
The man was only 22 years old.

RECUERDO DE LO QUE FUE

Por Ruth Loran Amador

Arbol de tronco fuerte,
en el pasado deslumbroso,
Lojas en el suelo tienes,
señal de maños criminales.

Con el pasar del tiempo,
solo recuerdos dejas,
Lojas en el suelo tienes,
para en ellas caminar.

Alegría a tu alrededor,
sombras en tu interior;
raíces sembradas,
señal de vida.

Morirá tu físico
más tu recuerdo perdura;
atraves del tiempo,
creceras mas bello.

EL ÁRBOL MUERTO

Por Angel Pagan

Solo queda el tronco de un gran árbol. Sus raíces penetradas en la tierra de donde fue derribado.

Seco y hueco ha quedado con el paso de los tiempos lo rodean secas hojas arrastradas por el viento.

El leñador lo ha cortado para sacarlo del medio. También de él tomó leña para cocer su alimento.

De él hizo fuego para calentar su cuerpo frente a la chimenea en el tiempo del invierno.

Ya todo ésto ha pasado y en un silencio sereno ha quedado abandonado el tronco de un árbol muerto.

STAR LIGHT

By Henry Graves

Star light and stars sparkling bright
For the sisters and brothers who roam the streets at night
I pray to God to set things right
As they roam by the moon light.

LOUISE

By Henry Graves

Big beautiful eye
Looking up at me
Was a sunflower.

PART II

I HOPED IT WAS JUST A BAD MOMENT

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH DEATH

By Wilfredo Rodriguez

The year was 1974 in my home town, Utuado, Puerto Rico. I remember I was playing a game of pool with my friend. It was about 9:30 that night when we saw a kid running down the streets. We didn't pay any attention to it. No one at the corner store did anyways. About five minutes later that same kid that was running came back to the store. He was scared and was asking have you seen my sister?

No one did. He ran back out to the street, it wasn't ten minutes after he went out when we saw him walking by. That night was dark. No moonlight. My friend and I kept our game going – it was interesting to us. Then I asked him what do you think is going on out there? He only shook his head and said he wanted to find out; and so we did.

Tony and I walked to the place we used to call wolf mouth because of the darkness of the place. As we were walking we heard loud voices from a man and a woman. Then we ran over. We used to love fights. We got there a little bit late. William had already killed his wife with a knife going right through her heart. It was unbelievable! I could not believe what I had seen. She was only 18 years old. He was 22 and always drunk. She was a sweet girl, never lost in troubles, a good housewife. Tony and I ran back to the store and told them what just happened out on the street.

The owner called the police and told them that someone had just been killed. The police took about one hour to get to the site of the scene.

William had run away and hid over at his mother's house under his bed. The police went there and brought him out. Then to jail. Tony and I, and the victim's brother, were witnesses to that murder.

On the place where she was killed her family has put a cross with her name and date of her death. No one ever knew why he killed her. My question always was why? We all knew her. My sister grew up with her. Every time we walk by we always stop and look and remember what happened that night. The first time I saw someone being killed in cold blood. I know I will never forget it. It was something I didn't want to see.

HABLAR MUCHO MAS DEL SIDA

Por Genoveva Galarza

Aqui en Mujeres Unidas
siempre tenemos un tema
y este mes aun nos queda
hablar mucho más del SIDA

Es un tema sobre la vida
y es una gran preocupación
y estámos en unión
aprendiendo sobre el SIDA

Escucha amiga mía
este problema del montón
más si usas un condón
más facil sera tu vida

Esto es una protección
para ti y tu compañero
pues tu vida es lo primero
y de eso no hay discusión

Los adictos por la inyección
acortan mas sus vidas
con el problema del SIDA
para ellos no hay solución

Un poco de comprensión
y saber como hablarles
podria ser la base
para dejar la adicción

Es un problema de todos
busca más información
asi tendras más noción
no tendras la mente ída
y recuerda que del SIDA
prevención es la solución

English Translation of
Hablar Mucho Mas del SIDA

TALKING ABOUT AIDS

By Genoveva Galarza

Here at Mujeres Unidas
we always have a theme
and this month we still
have a lot to say about AIDS

It's a theme about life
and it's a great concern
so we are united
learning about AIDS

Listen my friend
about this problem for many
if you use a condom
the easier your life will be

This is a protection
for you and your partner
your life is what is important
and about that, there is no question

Drug addicts, by using needles
shorten their lives more–
with the problem of AIDS
for them there is no solution

A little understanding
and knowing how to talk with them
could be the beginning
for them to overcome addiction

This is a problem for all of us
Look for more information
that way you'll have the knowledge
and you won't forget
remember that with AIDS
prevention is the solution

PENSANDO EN EL AIDS

Por Delfina Rentas

Ahora con este virus
Igual que una maldición
Debemos sentirnos seguras
si actuamos con precaución

Ten cuidado amigo mio
si no te quieres contagiar
con la enfermedad del Sida
que es una escolla moral

Si quieres estar segura
intenta usar el condón
Dale información a tus hijos
acerca de esta infección

Ayer en la clase de Inglés
informaron en Mujeres Unidas
de como debemos actuar
si contraemos el Sida

Si quieres estar informada
investiga en Mujeres Unidas
donde tienen información
acerca de la Immuno Deficiencia Adquirida

Al llegar al hospital
insegura y muy nerviosa
dejando atrás a mis hijos
sin poder hacer otra cosa

Qué tristeza compañeras
hablar de esta enfermedad
pero más triste es verlos morir
y tener que lamentar

Instruye y habla a tus hijos
acerca de esta enfermedad
y asi estarán seguros
que se deben de cuidar

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English Summary–

In this poem Delfina Rentas put her thoughts in writing regarding how this deadly disease is affecting her community, the future generations and family relations. She believes that parents should start talking to their kids about protection and they should begin to inform them about AIDS, because it is harder to see them die due to the lack of knowledge and negligence. She considers that mothers are an instrument of education to battle this disease. She is grateful that through the AIDS educational month at Mujeres Unidas she learned about AIDS and now she is able to pass the information along to her children and family. In one stanza Delfina writes:

"Instruct and talk to your children
about this disease
so they themselves will assuredly know
that they have to take care."

MI HERMANA

Por Mujeres Unidas en Accion

Yolanda: Hermana madura, conservadora, una alumna de Mujeres.
Laura: Hermana joven, independiente, estudia y trabaja.
Zenaida: Amiga de Yolanda. (La chismosa. Es tambien una alumna de MUA.)

I.

Zenaida: Hola.
Yolanda: Hola. ¿Dónde vas tan temprano?
Z: Yo quiero hablarte acerca de tu hermana. Anoche ella llegó muy tarde a la casa.
Y: Yo lo sé. Todo el mundo lo sabe.
Z: Yo la ví porque mi bebé se levantó a las 3 de la mañana. Ella vino con un hombre diferente al de la semana pasada.
Y: ¿Quien éra? ¿Viste el color del carro? ¿Tú lo viste a él?
Z: La semana pasada era un hombre blanco. Y el de anoche era un hombre de piel obscura. Ten cuidado con tu hermana, habla con ella acerca del SIDA. Recuerda lo que nosotras aprendimos en MUA.

II.

L: ¿Quieres una taza de café?
Y: Si, claro.
L: Llegué tan tarde anoche. Estoy cansadísima.
Y: Si. Lo sé. ¿Dónde estuviste anoche?
L: Fui a bailar. Salí con unos amigos. Luego fuimos a pasear.
Y: Yo estoy preocupada por el tipo de vida que estás llevando.
L: Es mi vida. Yo quiero vivirla de esa manera. Yo soy suficientemente mayor.
Y: Muy bien. Es tu vida. Tú puedes vivirla de la manera que quieras. ¿Pero tú sabes cómo protegerte del SIDA?
L: ¿Qué te hace pensar que yo vaya a agarrar (coger) SIDA? Esta enfermedad es solo de los homosexuales.
Y: Tú estás equivocada. La realidad es que cualquiera en nuestra comunidad pudiera estar en peligro de coger el SIDA.
L: ¿Qué estas tú diciendo? ¿Que yo soy una prostituta?
Y: Dejame hacerte una pregunta. ¿Tú sabes algo de las vidas de esos hombres con los que tú sales?
L: Todo lo que yo se es que ellos tienen dinero. Yo puedo divertirme con ellos, ir a lugares caros con ellos.

Y: El dinero, los carros, la vanidad. No son cosas importantes. Lo importante es tu vida.
L: Muy bien. Yo lo pensaré. Tengo que alistarme, tengo que ir a la escuela.

III.

Z: Ya hablaste con tu hermana.
Y: Yo estoy tratando, pero ella no me quiere escuchar. A ella no le preocupa mucho. Ella no quiere hablar del SIDA. Yo no se que hacer.
Z: No deberías desanimarte. Tu deberías mantenerte tratando. Recuerda: Nosotras somos comunicadoras en nuestra comunidad. Y, la información: "Es la única arma que tenemos contra el SIDA.

MY NAME IS L.S.D.

By Mattie Wheeler

I am looking for a friend to rule.
I will make you feel like a fool.
I will take everything you can get.
Do you understand?
I am your boss.
I will make you kill your mother.
What do you have for me?
Give me your money, your car, and your home.
I got you now.
I am dangerous.
I am the baddest.
You can call me hash or L.S.D.
I will make you kill for me.
You is dead.
You don't have anything my love.
You is a fool.
L.S.D. has made a mess out of so many children.
I wish someone would do something about it.
It has killed my best friend and one of my sons-in-law.
If I could, I would do away with all drugs.
Hey, I am back with the name Mr. Cocaine.
I am looking for you boys and girls, old and young.
You think you know it all.
You been everywhere, but you can't see what I am doing to you.
I am going to bring you down to your knees.
You are in my power now.
I am the toughest.
Look at me now.
You want help—too bad.
I got you rocking and rolling your way right into hell.
You don't know how to stop.
You are in my power little man.
You need lots of money to keep me.
You will have to mug and steal for me.
You can't get me off your back.
You have to give me your whole body and soul.
Yes, my friend, you are in pain now, but you stay with me.
I will put you in your grave.
All you want is one more shot.
You don't think you can become addicted to L.S.D.
Just come to me.

You is welcome to stay in the arms of Death.
And you say you don't want to die.
But you always come running back to me.
As sure as God made little green apples you will be in my power.
Miss Heroin get with it.
You need me.
You will give life for me and I will take it.
I am what's happening.
Look at me.
I am your king.
I am all you have.
You don't have a home or a bed to lay your head on.
You are the biggest fool in the world.
I am going to kill you.
You can't leave me alone.
You just keep coming back for more.
You can't go to school.
You won't listen to your mother or father.
You said you want help but you always come running back to me.
You are in my power.
You are dirt.
Look.
I am back with a new bag.
I am gold.
I am your doctor.
I am your life.
You can't live without me.
I can keep you from eating and sleeping.
You don't know where you are going.
You don't know what you are going to do?
Just mess up your life and let the policeman lock you up?
But you have to deal with the police and drugs.
You young people have to take a look at your life
and stop letting the drugs run it.
Let me introduce you to Miss Heroin.
The best.
She has killed stronger men than you.
She is what a fool like you wants in her arms.
Her arms are very cold.
You cannot realize you need her.
What are you grinning for?
You can't leave her alone.
She will make you one of her pushers.
She will promise to do things to your heart and mind.

I wish they could get a place for people on drugs to go to
where they don't have to pay.
Teach children about drugs and what drugs will do to them.
We need to get drugs off the street.
Maybe if more people work with the police it would help.
I am a mother with a son on drugs.
I will do what I can to get drugs off the streets.
I need help in dealing with drugs.
If anyone can hear my plea, help me to deal with my son and his drug.
I don't know what to do.
Where have you been you big fool?
You said you were going to stop.
You can't.
I got you.
Maybe someone can do something about it.
Open a place for our sons and daughters–
we need to do something about how to fight.
Drugs are taking over our children.
We do have to stop drugs.
The police are not helping too much.
They will let your children get in bad trouble before they do anything.

DESPONDENT FEET

By Judy Allen

Hi, hands, how are you doing?
You are always dangling up there, making fun of me,
while I am down here being trodden on every day.
I am being weighed down and stepped on, day-in and day-out.
I tell you, I get no respect.
I take this person wherever she wants to go–
Back and forth, upstairs downstairs
up hills, timidly down basements–
Hop, skip and jumping,
even smooshing annoying insects if necessary–
but I am being taken for granted.
I need a vacation.
Put me up on a tufted silk cushion in bright red.
Soothe me in lukewarm water.
Pad me with gentle pearls from oysters
from the deep sea bed.
Smother me in oils,
Bathe me in creams from never, never lands.
Then finish by polishing me off with the finest nail polish
from Clairol or Avon.
Look, hands, all you do, day-in, day-out is swing around.
Just plain dangle–
Or you could hug the near and dear heart.
How sweet!
You are famous for touching, hugging, writing, playing the piano–
even being kissed sometimes.
Nothing ever kisses me–
not even a daring toad.
Come on, hands, you get all the honors.
Not me, poor little feet.
I'm just being stomped around,
freezing in cold or sweating in heat.
After all, I am good for a swift kick in the you-know-where.
All I can say is, that's not fair.
But each day I still keep doing my job.
What the heck!
I tell you, I get no respect.

PART III

I AM A WOMAN WHO HAS TUMBLED AND TURNED

YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN LOVE, IT EXISTS!!

By Martine Gurton

Sometimes life starts out rough. There were my two sisters, two brothers, mother, father and me. The scenery, small houses and pretty yards should have comforted me as a child. Then there was our house hidden behind the others.

It didn't share their serenity at all. And life there was not so calm. My father, an alcoholic, did not make any effort to give us "La vie en rose."

Often at school, the teacher would let me sleep at the back of the class. In a small town news travels fast. Therefore, my teacher was aware of how on occasion the police would come to our house at night to try to calm down our father, in one of his drunken stupors. If that didn't work, we had to spend the night at our aunt's house.

We had no choice, he had literally thrown us out.

I was six years old and my sister eight when the office of social security intervened deciding that it was safer for us to be living at a boarding school. And so we did. Our mother was prohibited from visiting us for one whole year.

My sister tried to support me as best she could, but it was so hard for her too. We missed the love of our mother. And while nobody woke us up in the middle of the night to throw us out, nobody kissed us at bed time. Denied maternal affection we suffered, uncared for, left cold.

After that year, which felt like ten years, we finally were allowed to see our mother on Sunday afternoons. She had been living with my older brothers. My father, in solitude, had drunk himself to death. I was twelve when I returned home to live with my mother.

When I was twenty, I met Claude. Ha! What a beautiful story that was at the beginning! He was ten years older than me, and partly because of that our life together grew to be unbearable! Possessive and jealous, he was never able to believe in my love. I grew tired of showing it, and tired of swearing it to him. After seven years, which could have been wonderful, and not the perpetual battle which it was, I left Claude without a word of explanation. I had tried and I had lost. So disheartened, I chose not "to love" anymore, not believing.

Then one day he came into my life "an American in Paris." After our first night together, I felt as though I couldn't live without him. We spent three days together in Paris and then he returned to Boston.

I couldn't stop hoping that I would see him again.

As soon as he was back in Boston, he phoned me, and continued to almost daily during our three months of separation. We had to pay a bill of $2,500.00. We decided that I would cross the Atlantic. And that I did. I left everything: my mother, my job, and Paris so familiar to me after so many years.

Today, almost one year since I left Paris, I'm still floating on clouds of love on living in "La vie en rose."

If I have told you about my life, it was only to tell you this: It is entirely up to you whether or not to be happy. Happiness is in your hands. Take the risk to live it. Open your eyes, look around you, love is there. A friend's love, child's love, lover's love, whom you meet just by chance.

Keep yourself open to it!!
Dare to be happy! Love!

RUNAWAY

By Pearl Thompson

My most painful experience is when my daughter ran away. I felt as if I was an empty jar with nothing inside. My body felt so lifeless as if all the blood was drained from my veins.

I tried to eat, but couldn't, tried to sleep, but couldn't. I was like a walking zombie waiting, listening, hoping, and praying that she will walk through the door. For three days and nights was the period of my most awful nightmare. I hope I never have to go through that again.

I hoped it was just a bad moment in life, but it goes on. It started when I moved my daughter to another school. Her grades started to go down and it just got worse. She got kept back for the first time in the same grade. She claimed it's because of the move.

I try to console her but things just get worse. Now she has run off for days, and instead of trying to do better, she does worse each time. It's like living with someone who has two personalities or someone who is taking drugs.

I just wish she would trust me enough to talk to me about her problem. I want to be not just her Mom, but her friend, too.

Parenting is such a hard task. I don't know how today's children can take life so lightly with no respect or gratitude for the life God has granted them. If they could just see the power given them, they would realize how precious they are. They are given the power to choose right or wrong, to be in control of their lives, whether to be famous or to be nothing. They have this choice. Even though our society can create a lot of stumbling blocks in life, if one wants to really make something of themself, God has given them that gift to be in control.

You would think with all the hard struggling their parent has to go through bringing them up, they would be more wise and have more respect for themselves. Instead, they seem to see respect as a big joke or something from the dark ages. But if they knew how much strength one gains from those dark ages or take a moment to notice how strong their mothers are to be able to go through all that hardship, they would wise up and do better. Instead, they think getting high and sleeping around is it until they finally face *reality,* which is sometimes getting pregnant, or worse, hooked on drugs, which for others is too late. So be smart. Be in control. I know you can.

TERRIFIED & MAD

By Pat Derrah

When children are born in this world, their eyes light up in amazement of everything. They are in awe of everything with their hands and their eyes. They touch everything, always putting fingers in mouth and hair. They have a mother and father, a sister and brother, and children see the world as a fairytale and everything looks so nice to them. But it has a way of disappearing in one day.

Children have a hard road to take just with growing up in this world without problems. But when they have to deal with drugs, alcohol, and violence, it makes them off balance.

Bridge Over Troubled Waters helps women and children with their problems like people not being able to communicate with each other so they can live in this world without fighting. Anybody can talk to them at any time. They will help you anytime when you have problems with your family or anybody, and help you to be able to cope with your problems and to help you to survive in the world.

MOTHER'S DAY

By Hilda Morales

When I was little I remember I bought one cup for Mother's Day. My teacher said everybody must save money for Mother's Day. I saved 5 or 10 centavos a day for about a month before. Everybody bought something special for Mother's Day.

When I was a little girl the people had a tradition that when your mother is dead the person has to put one white carnation on the uniform or a red one if she is alive. Sometimes the school prepares a dramatic poem for their mothers.

Nowadays you can buy something very expensive and people think differently about Mother's Day. I think now people don't have time, the world is too complicated and you don't have time for reflection.

MY MOTHER

By Piedad Valdes

My Mother's name was Mercedes. She was 50 years old when she died from a heart attack in my country 15 years ago.
She had 15 children, 5 sons and 10 daughters.
I loved my mother very much and I remember her always.
She was very pretty. In my family I am the last one. I am the youngest. I remember she was special for me. When I played in the street with my friend, she said "Be careful" because my father doesn't like us to play in the street.
She taught me how to go down the road of life straight, to do good things, not bad.
I remember her a lot of times and feel sad.

IN PUERTO RICO: A STORY ABOUT MY MOTHER AND FATHER

By Carmen Medina

When I was about 4 years old I remember my father went to New York. I remember when he came back to P.R., he brought 2 dresses with him, for me and my sister. The yellow dress was for my sister and the green dress was for me. My mother was happy. I remember my mother used to tell us about how she met my father when they were in school. My mother and father married when she was 13 years old and my father was 16 years old. They were married for 38 years. In 1980 my father died and she cried all the time for him. She has worked for 23 years in a school kitchen. She makes lunch for 40 or 50 children. She likes her job. Me and all my family will never forget my father and we love my mother too.

THE PROBLEM WITH VELCRO SNEAKERS

By Blanca Marzan

When I was teaching my two younger children to learn to tie their shoes, I had a hard time with one of them. Carlos was my hard time. He took one month to learn the same thing. Three or four times a day I asked Carlos to tie his shoes, and a few minutes later his laces were untied again. He is a little lazy but I know he tries hard.

I bought two pairs of sneakers for Carlos. One pair was lace sneakers and the other pair was velcro sneakers. All the time he used the velcro sneakers and I asked him why don't you use the other pair. He kept his mouth closed. Two weeks ago I bought a new pair of lace sneakers for him and he used them very well and I didn't have a hard time with him about that. I think he likes these sneakers because his friends wear them.

MOTHERS AS TEACHERS

By Angela Montero

I taught my daughter to eat by herself, when she was a baby. I also taught her how to play, to use the toilet and to find her clothes and put them on.

When my daughter was 5 years old, she told me "Mom I want to go to school." I sent her to private school for several months. Soon we came to live in Boston. Here she went to school.

Now she is 7 years old. Every day I help her do the homework, and to look for something. Sometimes she is lazy and she says, "Mom help me tie my shoe." When I don't have time I say, "I can't." She says, "Yes, you can because you are my mother and all mothers help their children."

Now she likes to go to school and share with me her class. I want my daughter to learn good habits for a better life.

LEARN TO PRAY

By Margarita Henriquez

I have taught my three sons every night before they go to their bed, they should pray to God. The name of the prayer is "Padre Nuestro," "Ave Maria," "Senormio Jesucristo."

Sometimes I stay with them, but when I am busy, I don't stay to pray with them. They pray by themselves. I know they pray by themselves because when I have finished my duties, I go to their room and I ask, "Are you finished praying?" And they say, "yes." So I say, "OK. Good night."

Also I have taught my children to go to church every Sunday, because I think it is important we say thank you to God for the life he has given us. Sometimes I go to sleep late on Saturday night and on Sunday one time I woke up late and my children told me, "Mother we are late to go to church, please hurry up."

I AM A WOMAN

By Judy Allen

I am a woman
who has tumbled and turned
around and around
who has scratched and scraped
with feet still aground
who has taken the giant key
to the doors of life
and searched and opened and closed
with plenty of strife
who almost had her soul ripped away
but nay, no man ain't mighty enough
I say.
I am a woman strong but gentle.
Cross my path–
but be careful.

I REMEMBER

By Agnes Falaise

I remember when my Grammie prepared some coffee, before she gave it to me my sister told me, "Don't drink that coffee. Look at her eyes. They make me sick." And Grammie told me, "Agnes, my daughter, I am asking God something for you – a lot of benedictions. Don't listen to this little mischief maker!"

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

■

Mattie Wheeler is from the "old cotton field down home." Her hometown is called Helena, Arkansas. It is a small Southern town, with kind warm people. She said, "I wrote the poem because I want other mothers to know my pain. I want to share it with them. I am a mother with a son on drugs. I hate drugs. I wish someone would find a way to do away with drugs."

■

Pearl Thompson came to the U.S. in 1968. Her major reasons for coming to the U.S. were to continue her education and to "make a better life for myself." Somehow, she says stoically, "I took a detour to become a mother."

Speaking about her writings, Pearl says: "I wrote my piece because I want other parents who have similar problems to know there are people out there who share common experience, and share the same concern for our children."

■

Blanca Marzan is from Puerto Rico.

■

Margarita Henriquez is from El Salvador.

■

Zona Terrell Johnson is from Chattanooga, Tennessee. She is the mother of four children and four grandchildren. She is a community teaching assistant at the Jackson/Mann Community School. She loves to teach and to write. A contest was held to find the title for the magazine. Zona Johnson's entry, *Need I Say More,* won.

■

About the Artist:

Jean Bazile, the artist whose painting appears on the cover, is an ESL student at the Haitian Multi-Service Center. Bazile was born in Macmel, Haiti, on January 14, 1920. His father died when he was only nine; and his mother, when he was 14. Becoming an orphan at this very early age, nurtured a sensitivity that is easily discernable in the tenderness that comes through the strength of his paintings.

After enlistment in the army in 1942, Jean was married in 1945. He began taking art classes at Centre d'Art in 1952, at the urging of a friend, Dewitt Peter, who had noticed the artistic talent of Jean Bazile. Following retirement from the army, Bazile continued to paint.

Mr. Bazile left Haiti in 1975, and spent three years living in New York and working in a factory. He moved to Boston in 1978, and worked at the Marriott Hotel until 1985. Presently, he attends ESL classes at St. Leo's Haitian Multi-Service Center.

At the encouragement of Carol Chandler, Jean Bazile returned to painting after 15 years. NEED I SAY MORE is most appreciative to Mr. Jean Bazile for his graciousness in rendering this painting for the maiden issue of the magazine.

The original 5" x 7" painting is done in brilliant colors and can be seen in the editorial offices of NEED I SAY MORE, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, 625 Huntington Ave., Boston.

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We wish to thank the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for funding the first year of the Publishing for Literacy Project. The Project is jointly-sponsored by the Public Library of Brookline and the Adult Literacy Resource Institute.

Thanks to the directors and teachers of the following ABE/ESL Programs in the Boston/Brookline areas who encouraged and prepared their students for participation in the Project:

Cape Verdean Community House, Inc.	Roxbury
Cardinal Cushing Center	South End
East Boston Harborside Community School	East Boston
Jackson/Mann Community School	Allston/Brighton
Jamaica Plain Community Schools	Jamaica Plain
Jefferson Park Writing Center	Cambridge
Haitian Multi-Service Center	Dorchester
Mujeres Unidas en Accion	Dorchester
Scale	Somerville

Special thanks are due to artist Jean Bazile of the Haitian Multi-Service Center in Dorchester for executing a special painting for the cover of this issue.

The Editorial Committee must certainly be recognized for its relentlessness in attempting to produce a publication which reflects the objectives of the project.

Very special appreciation is due to the following persons who provided administrative and artistic advice, and were always willing to serve as a sounding board during the difficult period when the project was being transformed from nothing into something:

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Kona Khasu
Project Coordinator

NEED I SAY MORE

A magazine of adult student writings

Volume II, Number 3
Fall 1989

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Published by the Publishing for Literacy Project,
a project jointly sponsored by the Public Library of Brookline
and the Adult Literacy Resource Institute of Roxbury Community
College and the University of Massachusetts/Boston.

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The cover for this issue is a drawing done by Anne Brink, entitled "Sitting Down Together." Anne Brink is a former teacher at the Community Learning Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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PREFACE

The Editorial Committee is anxious to publish the works of new writers who have not been published in *Need I Say More*. It believes strongly that publishing the works of first time writers (and authors), in *Need I Say More* will keep the contents of the magazine both exciting and appealing to the readers for whom the magazine is intended. It is for this reason that we are proud to introduce in this issue the works of new writers Vivian Torres, Zonia Toledo, Julie Joseph, Carolyn Justice, and Rita Lopes.

The experiences these new writers share with us are as capivating as any. Each writer has attempted to portray her individual life experience while grappling with the constraints of the written word. Their enthusiasm to share their experience in spite of the numerous obstacles which could have discouraged them is readily seen in their writing. Many ambitious new writers with lesser determination have abandoned their own goal of being able to share their experience through writing. Their determination to succeed where others might have easily given up serves as an outstanding example for others.

Beginning writers are encouraged to write their thoughts and experiences, regardless of whether these thoughts or experiences are short, or long; important, or "unimportant." Go over your writings several times, and make changes in them, if you feel you should. It is important to know that writers, even experienced ones, often go over their writings numerous times before they feel ready to have their work read by others.

Why should it be any different for us, new writers?

STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHING FOR LITERACY PROJECT

The purpose of *Need I Say More* and the Publishing for Literacy Project is to encourage new adult writers to write and new adult readers to read. For us to be successful in this mission, students in adult literacy programs must receive the support needed for them to write about their own lives, their own realities, in an open, honest and heartfelt way. The project's Advisory Committee, Editorial Committee, and staff have therefore agreed that writers need to be given the widest possible freedom regarding content and language consistent with the audience and purpose of this magazine. Consequently, not every piece of writing included here will please every reader – indeed, some readers may find some pieces disturbing – but such is the nature of writing and reading, of publishing and literacy, and we are grateful to our readers for their understanding. Of course, the writings included here are the thoughts and words of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the project's sponsors or funders.

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POEMS

Ada Cherry

Poems are the pit of
A sense of a Great Imagination
It gives affection to the Heart
Mind, Body and Soul.
Soul
Body
Mind.

INDIAN SUMMER

Ada Cherry

Indian Summer comes
very few times in the Fall
Bright Sunshine gleaming through
Like Mid Summer's Blue
Red, yellow, purple Leaves
Too, oh what a beautiful
Indian Summer Day!!

JUG HEAD

Ada Cherry

Secretive and dishonest as always
He will play a game to get satisfied
He wants a dime then he wants a dollar
How much more can you spare?
She's my girl as he calls her
I can use her, abuse her.
He can bring her down to his level
His level is as low as dirt.
He will shame you, He will tame you
He will tame you, if you let him.
I know that one day she will make him pay.
She will destroy this terrible man.
If he gets in her way, She might Kill him.

I THOUGHT I WAS IN LOVE

Ada Cherry

I don't know what love is anymore.
Where has love gone? It seems to bring
me a whole lot of pain. It seems to me a game.

I thought I was in love; I don't want this kind
of love.
I hate, I cry. This is not love.
Sometimes I feel so alone, for this is not love.
I love the things that are so natural; but I don't
seem to get love back.
Please tell me. What is love?

THE DAY I FELL

Ada Cherry

One day I felt down under. I thought I couldn't rise
to the top. I thought, "If I hold tight with God on
my mind then maybe I will rise to the top." Each day
my God is on my mind. Every day He is right by
my side.
That day I will never go under again cause I have
God
on my side.

ST. FRANCIS HOUSE

Henry Graves

It's a nice place to
Go and eat when
You run out of money.
Or have no place
To live; but like every
Thing it has bad things
About it too.
But *'so'* that's life in Boston.

CHILLING

Henry Graves

I was chilling in John's Pizza House.
In Chinatown you see,
Someone came in and a few left back out,
The ones that stayed had stories to tell
While the night girls had their pretty bodies for sale
But check this out
There were a few guys
Who thought they were making that cold hard cash
But we all know that it only lasts for so long.
How long will that be?

THE MASTER

Henry Graves

I know this player,
Her game is real fresh.
She is a sweet young lady.
Pimping is her game.
She is 'fresh'
In all the ways she lives.
She is all about collecting
That cold, hard cash.
She does not beat or bang
Her girls because she knows
What it takes to please a man.
So she keeps them all
Fresh and down to please.

BEING OLDER AND TRYING TO GET AN EDUCATION TO FULFILL MY DESTINY

Henry Graves

My dream started off like this: I was lying down fast asleep thinking about what I did all day. Only one thing came to my mind! A nice young lady said to me in a nice, sweet way, "Would you like to call your mother?" In a weak, slow voice I said, "Yes." I was crying in joy. I tried to talk a little. Then I said, "Good-bye." That is when I said I will be a guidance counselor one day, just to help people, miles or states away from home keep in touch with their families. But then I found out I needed more education; so that is why I say you're never too old to learn; try it, you will like it.

FEELINGS

Anna Jimenez

My good friend, it was advice you always wanted
me to give you.
Sometimes I would listen.
Sometimes I couldn't help you.
Until a day came along and you got in trouble,
and I just didn't know what to do.
There are people who love you and care for you.
They want the best for you in everything you hope for.
But there is a problem. How can I help you?
There's only one way to find out.
I want to do the best in understanding how I can
help you.
But before I help you, you got to help yourself.
I would risk anything to do whatever it takes to
to go for the best in you.
The prayers I will say for you, the love I have
for you, will become stronger.
Because, there is only one way out.
My dear friend and soul of my heart, you are the
one who's got to be strong for yourself.
Believe in yourself, stop believing in others.
Others make things bad for you.
I wish I can help control your feelings for
people who do not care about you.
I'm only looking out for you. I would stand by
you in anything you want to tell me.
Once you can be strong for yourself, you can
have everything in life.
Life is part in what you can do for yourself.
Why must you trust someone who can't trust you?
This is why I listen to you. But sometimes I
can't see what you want in others.
I'm always going to be here.
I can't leave you now.
I want to be strong for you.
Remember, I care a lot about you or I wouldn't
sit here and explain to you what my feelings are.
My beloved Brother, I love you.

SUNSHINE LOVE

Anna Jimenez

There are my days of love
These are my days of joy.

Why has it been so long to look above?

The sky has changed.
The sun stopped coming out!

I want to see the sun!

Sunshine makes my world upside down.

When I'm upside down I never
Figure what will happen next.

Next time I might see the rain falling down.

The rain, it's so beautiful –
Falling, so I figure it will never stop.

The next time, snow fell all the way.

My signs of love and joy became
Everything I ever asked for.

This is why you should
Figure out what you want!

THE DAY PAUL GOT BUSTED

Anna Jimenez

I think it was on December 12, 1987. The day was very cold. Paul was with his girlfriend, Nina. Nina was tall, slender, and beautiful. She was the girl in Paul's life. She was Paul's girl. Sometime around 9 P.M–I am not very sure–Paul said to Nina, "I have to go do something. I will be back soon."

Paul left, waving goodbye, and throwing a kiss to his Nina. Reaching the corner grocery store, Paul ran into a fellow he greeted.

"What's up, Slim?" giving a five, and pressing his palm tightly into Slim's. Another friend–they greet him as Snake–parks his new car on the street, joins the group on the sidewalk. All of a sudden, Slim tells Paul, "It's this guy who wants to see you."

"Okay, send him upstairs," says Paul.

It's not clear what they are talking about. But they all go upstairs to Paul's apartment.

"I want to make a trade with you, Paul," Snake tells Paul, going on, "How about giving me some cocaine for some money?"

Just as Slim and Snake begin to count the money, the door comes flying off, and there is a command, "Put it down. Freeze! You're all under arrest!"

"Put your gun down off my friend's head, or I'll blow you away," said Paul, not knowing this was a cop.

"I'll blow your friend away, also," shouted the cop, as he showed his badge to Paul.

Paul held the gun to the cop's head for awhile. Then, he put his gun down. Just as Paul laid his gun down, there was the sound of police sirens in the community. It seems like all the police cars in Boston were in our community that night. In all, about twenty undercover cops rushed in the apartment, shouting orders. Some of them went into the apartment belonging to Paul's father. The old man was confused because he did not know what was going on. The cops just busted in. Then, he sees Paul in the other room with two more officers.

The cops say to the old man, "You're all under arrest."

"Paul, Paul, what's going on?" asked the old man.

Paul's father was concerned about the safety of his wife. But one family member reminded him that she was gone to play bingo, at the neighborhood church. She spends a lot of time playing bingo after work.

Just as they were talking about her, she walked in. Coming up the stairs, climbing the stairs with so much energy.

"What the hell is going on here?" she asked, seeing all the cops going through her apartment, and tearing up things. Then she sees Paul, Slim and Snake, all handcuffed.

"Please tell me what is happening in here."

"Sit down, Miss," says one cop.

"You are all going to jail," says another cop. They continued to search the house, opening anything that was closed. Soon, one of them shouted, "Here. It's some coke stuck under the toilet bowl."

"Where did you get the stuff?" asked the other cop.

"Yes. Where did you get the stuff? We are not joking, you know?"

"You could be spending twenty years in jail."

Paul did not say a word. He was quiet. The cop kept asking his question: "Where did you get the stuff from?" and Paul just kept quiet. Not saying a word.

"We are all going for a ride to the Station," one cop said. When they reached the Police Station, everyone is questioned. One by one. Paul made a phone call to his sisters to let them know what was happening, and why it happened. Nicky, Paul's oldest sister, begins to figure out what to do. Finally, she decides to gather all members of the family together.

"Let's remain calm, and see what will happen," Nicky told the family gathering.

The court day is Monday, December 14. Paul's whole family is at the court. Nina, Paul's girlfriend, is also at the court. The judge enters and begins to read the papers in front of him. After reading the papers, he says everyone can go home except Paul.

"Guilty or not guilty?" the judge asks Paul.

"Not guilty." Paul tells the judge.

"Paul's bail is $10,000.00," says the judge. There is another court day. Everyone leaves the court except Paul. He is sent to jail until the family can get the bail money. Paul's sister, Nicky, tells the family that they should all go home and figure how to borrow money so that Paul can be freed.

After discussing with Paul's father, Nicky, Paul's sister, asks Danny to loan the money for Paul's bail. The next day, the bail is paid, and Paul is released. That evening, the entire family holds a meeting at the family house, and they ask Paul to explain what was going on. Why was Paul arrested? How was he involved so?

"Quiet! Quiet!" Paul's mother tells the family meeting.

"Let's rest. I am tired. We will discuss it later."

Everyone washed up, and began to eat supper. Paul's mother and father went in to rest after supper. Paul went on about his business.

On December 15, 1987, Nina gave birth to beautiful twins. Paul was so overjoyed he didn't even know what to do. He called his mother and shouted, "Mom, I have twins. Nina had twins."

For awhile, the family forgot the trouble with the cops, and visited Nina at the hospital. As the days went by, everything was fine. The coming of the twins had brought a new attitude, new hope, new love, and new life.

THE WRATH OF A CONMAN

Julie Joseph

He conned his way through life as a child
He stole, he begged, he borrowed

He brided his way through to your heart
With only one thought:

How to get a ready cash flow
Of your hard earned dough.

He tears your heart apart.
He got you on his side
Without pain or pride.

When all your money is gone,
And you're no more fun,

He leaves you in sorrow.
Now you must borrow,

To sustain your dignity
And keep off the charge card company

For lack of unpaid property,
And inside your body,

Your heart lies cold and empty
For you have just been had.

The feeling is sad.
And you will have to live
With the tragedy until eternity.

WORK!!!

Julie Joseph

Work! All I do is work!
I work for a little money and
A lot of pain
Sometimes it gives pleasure
Sometimes it's no game
The phone drives me crazy and the
People do too
My typewriter doesn't work because
It's lost a screw
Typing and phoning are not the only
Things I do
I complain and yell at the patients too

FRIENDS!

Julie Joseph

I tried to be a friend,
But 'lucked' out again.

I was used to being kind,
It destroyed my frame of mind

The thought of helping another
Friend has lost me forever.

My soul is dying;
And I am left crying

I need no friends;
No one to care

Is this what you get
For being sincere?

Trampled and torn apart,
Trying to share the love
That's in your heart.

Be kind to one another.
That's what we were taught.
But today kindness is
Lost in a narrow path.

"GIVE ME"

Elizabeth A. Kanze

Give me love.
Give me light.

Give me art.
Give me a smile.

Give me pain.
Give me sorrow.

Give me your love.
Give me truth.

Give me a kiss of your soul.
Give me a hug of your life.

Give me friendship.
Give me trust.

Give me your memory.
Give me change.

Give me death.
Give me life.

Just give of yourself.

"IN THE EYES"

Elizabeth A. Kanze

In the eyes is a world of sorrow.
As I watch the man on the street.
His eyes cry inside my heart.

In the eyes is a world of madness.
When I turn away and wonder what his life is like.
I feel like dying inside.

In the eyes is a world of love.
I turn to him and tried to give a dollar.
He did not want money.

He wants love for his fellow human being.
I did not give that . . .
I didn't know what to do or say.

All I saw in the eyes of the hurt man
    sorrow and madness
What do I do?

"DEAR FATHER"

Elizabeth A. Kanze

I see the pain in your eyes.
You smile,
But you don't feel that way.

I remember how you were when I was a child.
You smile,
But you don't feel that way.

You cry for your brother.
As I cry with you.

I see the pain in your heart.
You smile,
But you don't feel that way.

I remember crying for you and me.
To stop the war between us.

I see the pain in your bones.
You smile,
But you don't feel that way.

I remember your madness.
You smile,
But you don't feel that way.

Now we are at peace, dear father.

EL CAFE DE JUANA

Alma Santana

Enseguida que ella entra a la casa se prepare su instant cafe.
Es simpatico, simple y tranquilo.
Es light, tibio y abundante.
No se queja, se queda donde lo dejan; usualmente en varios lugares de la casa.
Pero ella siempre va y lo busca. Y aunque trio se lo toma.

SHARLA

Barbara Shelley

I have a lovely daughter who grows like the trees.
She's very smart in school and gets all A's and B's.
She has beautiful ice glaze eyes.
When you look at them, they light up like the skies.
Her ways are very lady-like;
And her nails she does not bite.
I'm so proud she is part of my life.
She will be much more than somebody's wife.

LETTING GO

Barbara Shelley

Separation is a painful thing.
It's about letting go and spreading your wings.
There's a part of me that still wants to hold on;
But I know its just a feeling and soon it will be gone.

STANDING ALONE

Barbara Shelley

What do I know about love?
I know it's God given from above.
It feels good inside and out.
It's about giving when you thought you ran out.
Seek and you shall find;
Look ahead,
Don't look behind for love.

WRITING

Barbara Shelley

I like writing. When I write, things become clear to me. It's also a way of expressing myself. And it allows me to have some intimacy. Writing is a seduction of self. My inner-most feelings are put down on paper for all to see.

How I feel when I write is exposed, if only for a minute. I also feel an awakening of some kind because I think I tend to touch on things that are not well known to me. Again, I am feeling awakened and exposed again. Why? Because I didn't see that it was me I was exposing myself to. That is where the intimacy lies and the seduction comes into play.

LIFE

Barbara Shelley

As I stand on top of a hill I look down on both sides of me and there are valleys knowing no matter which way I go I have to go into the valley to get to the top of another hill. Green grass stands under my feet; the sky is blue with a faded touch of clouds.

I look down into the valley I see a heavy mist into the unknown. I cannot stand atop of this hill for I might lose my balance and fall. I must walk through the fear of the unknown. I must keep moving on.

BILLY

Barbara Shelley

I'm standing in a room that is empty yet full. There are four pairs of sneakers that have been worn but can never be filled again. I see a baseball cap that is empty yet full. Clothes hung neatly awaiting empty yet full. A boom box in the corner that has music only I can hear yet it is not on. I feel my heart pounding yet it is empty yet full of love, full of memories, full of you.

WHO'S TO BLAME?

Mattie Wheeler

Maybe if my mother had married
A rich man
I wouldn't be so poor.
She talked about hard times
She wants me to grow up and be somebody.
If I am going out with my friend,
She says "Be back at ten."
If my friend wants to do a little drugs,
Or steal a car,
She says, "Don't go out with them."
Someone has to be to blame.

I just can't take it any more.
I didn't ask her to have me
And make my life miserable.
She doesn't understand
How she is to be blamed for my life.

She says I look like my father.
He doesn't have any money.
I need some cash and a car.
There is one thing I don't need.
That's someone to tell me
What to do.
I don't need an education.
She keeps telling that mess about school.
She is to blame for my messed up life.
I am cool.
They don't know what's happening in this world.
She is old and don't understand this jive.

And what's happening?
I am the cool one!
She is to blame for my life.
Man, this is no Halloween!
I am catching hell!
Someone has to be the blame.
I am cool.

I just want to have a lot of fun,
Maybe if my father had been there for me,
I would have gotten it together.
I don't need someone to tell me what to do.
I need someone to do what I should do.
She is to blame for my life.
Maybe I am to blame for my life.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO BLAME

Mattie Wheeler

You and your Drugs

You have let them take over.
We don't have anything
Not even a place
To put your head.

You can look at me and
Say you love me.
My children don't have food
To eat. All you want is
One more drink or one
More shot. Then you say
You are sorry. You didn't
Mean to hurt us.

You don't know what to
Do. I would say get the
Hell off that mess. Stop blaming
Everyone for your mistake.

You are what you are.
Don't let drugs take your
Life.

You are looking for someone to blame
Look here. Look here
What's in this bag for a fool like you?

It ain't Halloween. It is death.
You have to make up you mind.
What you want in life.

I am here to take you on a trip
Don't call on your father or mother.

You have to deal with me and I am going
To kill you

I told you I'd be back and this time
I am going to give you hell
You better hope the police get to you
Before I do

I am going to kill you and lay you in
Your grave. There is no other way.
There is no need to look deep inside of
Yourself.

ONE KIND WORD

Mattie Wheeler

If I could I'd give
You the world my child.
I'd make each day count for
You

I am broken hearted. Sometimes
I cry all night
Wondering what the day will
Bring.

Sometimes sunlight
And sometimes rain. I hope.

Sometimes my heart is in my
Hand. My mind is always
Running away. I see things
That are not there

I worry about the things
You do. I can't tell you
How bad it hurts.

If only you could
Understand how I feel. If you could
Give me a kind word.

If you could just say hello,
It would mean so much to me.

I am always picking you up and you are
Always putting me down saying,
I should mind my business. I love
You my child. My heart breaks when
You are hurting.

I don't understand mothers. They are always
There when their children need them.
But where are the children when mothers
Need them.

A mother will say I am tired. Lord
I need to rest. But I must go on.
That child is mine.
I have to hold his hand.

THEY ARE KILLING OUR CHILDREN

Jo Ann Banks

Every morning I read the paper and I read that somebody's child was killed. The law needs to do something about teenagers killing each other because there is too much killing. It is bad that black teenagers kill each other because they want to sell drugs so they can get fast money. The fast money is going to their heads. Teenagers don't want each other on their streets or on their corners because they think that they own the streets. But they don't know that no one owns the street. I hope that teenagers will learn that the streets don't belong to any one person. These streets will still be right here. I hope that the teenagers and grown ups will take time to pick up a Bible and see what the Lord has to say about killing, stealing, and hurting his people. There is a saying, "What goes around comes around." So remember in the long run, whatever you do, let it be good because when you do bad things, you will have to pay for all your mistakes and "You will reap what you sow." (Galatians 6:7)

So kids, young men and women, get off drugs and get your life together. Your life is much too precious to throw away on drugs. Just look at how many young people are getting killed and hurt and their bodies destroyed from gun and knives. Look at some of the boys and girls, women and men. I wish I could do more than just write about what is going on with drugs in this terrible world. Even if you don't pick up a Bible to read it, think about what you want to do with your life. There are lots of things that you can do: find a job; go to work; get yourself a career. Do something besides kill and hurt people. Killing and hurting people will either lead you to a jail or lead you to a grave.

THANKS TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Theresa Band

In 1963, we needed the Civil Rights Movement because of the living conditions of the black people, and also the Spanish. The black people weren't able to sit in the front of the bus or sit in a restaurant with white people. In 1955, they started to organize boycotts to pressure the ruling whites to allow black people to use the rights to sit anywhere on public buses they want, even to eat in restaurants with white people. So we needed the Civil Rights Movement because there was a lot of segregation that stopped their rights as American citizens.

When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his speech during the March in 1963, things started to change a little bit. It even got a lot better than it was before. Now, we as people are able to go to school with the white people; even to vote. We can sit in the front seats of the public transport buses without any hassle. The Civil Rights Movement has changed a lot in the last 25 years. I am very grateful that we had a leader like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

DRUGS KILL DREAMS

Kathryn Cerenly

A dream is your desire, whatever you want to do. Everybody has dreams, even unbelievable ones that might come true. So you should always keep believing that your dreams may come true. For me, I don't want drugs to spoil my dream.

SLEEPING

Young Charles Cox, Jr.

Sometimes when I sleep I can get away from it all or get into it all. Ha ha! Now you're wondering what I am talking about. Well, just think for a minute. Think how when you sleep you can forget or not think about anything. And then you can sleep and everything comes to mind. How you lost your best friend or lover; or how you got into that cookie jar that your mother thought she hid from you.

Sometimes, there is a nightmare; something so scary you can't even move or say anything. You want to call for help. You want to scream; but your body, the whole body – lips, tongue, hands – nothing, I mean nothing would move. You lay there screaming inside. But nobody can hear you. Then tears start to roll down your cheeks and you feel death is on its way. And you lay there praying and calling "God, Please help me. Somebody. Mom. Dad. Joey! Somebody shake me. Pinch me. Bite me. Do something, I don't want to die."

But death is coming, there! You can see him, white, pale and quiet. Coming to you. He is getting closer and closer, step by step. Now you know that it's over, and you scream. You're awake. Woooooo! You say "I was only sleeping! Thank God."

At another time, you may be sleeping and dreaming of your lover; your sweet lover. The one lover who when you look in her eyes, you melt with desire. A strong passion of desire. A commitment to a long life together. Walking down the street holding hands, kissing and playing with such glee knowing that you finally made it happen. It feels good! All your childhood dreams and all you could imagine: skipping along happily; and with no cares in the world.

She tells you that you are all she needs and everything she ever wanted. Oh! How good it feels! You have your rings, a house, and a child is on the way. Everything is great. Just what you always wanted.

Then, you wake up. You are all alone. And she's with another guy. Well that's what I mean about sleeping. That's all I got to say. Good night. I got to get some sleep.

FEAR, A TRUE EXPERIENCE

Patricia Johnson

About five years ago, I went shopping in Dudley Square. At the time, I was having my very first experience driving my brother's car without him being there. I had my son and cousin, who were very young, with me.

It was around 4:30 in the afternoon during one of those winter days when it gets dark around 5:30. I was very happy and cheerful because I felt so independent and free. A half hour before that, I had just finished getting my check cashed and had bought money orders to pay rent and other bills. I went to Woolworth's, parked the car right across the street in a big open parking lot and went to Woolworth's. There were plenty of cars parked near by.

After I shopped around, I headed back to the car with bags and my pocket book on my shoulder. As always, the two kids were having words about who was going to sit in the front seat. When we got to the car, there was a big dark van on my right side and a big dark truck on my left.

It had gotten dark outside. The kids were running around the car playing, and I was trying to tell them to hold the bags, but they were not paying me any attention. So I laid my bags on the hood of the car, and I felt my pocketbook move. It was caught between the two big buttons in the shoulder area of my coat. I was having problems trying to unlock the door. All of a sudden I could see a small person coming up behind me from the corner of my eye. I thought it was one of the kids pulling on my bag. So I called out their names, and I told them to stop playing around. At the same time, they said it's not us! I looked and both of them were standing on the opposite side of the car. I turned all the way around and looked.

To my surprise this man was squatting down low pulling up at my bag. I started pulling back from him. That's when he stood up high and I started screaming, help! Somebody help me! Police! Police! He was still pulling and trying to get it. We were rocking back and forth until my strap broke and he went running through the parking lot.

I jumped into the car, backed out real fast, and tried to run him down. The traffic was so heavy, he ran across the street into Orchard Park Projects.

Everything I had was in that bag. I wanted to cry, but I couldn't. I felt so humiliated because no one would help me. There were a lot of people around. They just looked as if I had committed a crime.

I went to the police station and made out a report and had to go down there the next day to look at pictures to see if I recognized the face. The policeman told me I did a stupid thing. He said, "Never fight when someone is trying to snatch your bag because the attacker could have a gun, knife, or anything to harm you. Just let it go. Your life is more important." At the time I felt no fear.

The only thought going through my mind was I needed my money and didn't want anyone to take it from me.

I will never forget what he looked like—a tall, slim man, who wore glasses. He was dressed like a homeless person and looked young. He had on highwater bell bottom pants that came halfway down his legs, a jacket that was too small and big construction boots. He had very big eyes. He didn't make one sound. He just gave me a strange look.

After I left the police station I became very scared. From that day on, I was always looking and watching especially at night. I was even afraid to drive alone at night or go out after dark. I have not carried a pocketbook with any money or important things since then.

If a friend or family member carried a bag, I would not go any place with them. They would have to leave their bag at home. Even today, I still get chills and fear swells up inside of me, when I see young men hanging around or even looking like they are about to do something. It's the fear of not knowing what's going to happen next.

About a week later, someone mailed me my license and other ID's in an envelope with no name or return address. After a month, the police called my home to see if I had seen my attacker anywhere. They also told me that if I ever see him on the streets, I should just call and say that I see the person who robbed me and tell them where he is. They said they would send a car to pick him up. So far I have not seen him. But my fear continues on!

IN SEARCH OF OUR MOTHER'S GARDEN

Carolyn Justice

I believe Alice Walker was not only writing about her own mother's garden but her mother's inner beauty, and creative nature. This garden showed her mother's growth. As some of us create through our writings or the arts, Alice's mother did this through her garden and sewing. Alice Walker mentioned the beautiful quilts and the children's clothes her mother made.

Because her mother had to labor in the fields beside Alice's father during the day, I think her mother took great pride and joy in being able to create this garden. Her garden drew crowds of people, friends and strangers from afar. Her garden also helped to inspire Alice to express herself through writing and poetry which at one time black women were not encouraged or expected to explore.

Carolyn Justice

1. A woman is like a precious rose petal. You can preserve it or let it wither away.
2. They say life is like a bowl of cherries. They never bother to tell us what happens when they rot.
3. The freedom to be yourself without judgement is a rare gift you can receive from a friend.
4. Life is a continuous learning experience. If it's not nourished and developed, it fades away no longer to exist.
5. Little girls are made of sugar and spice.
   They also are so sweet and nice.
6. Little boys are rough and tough.
   When they're little they can make quite a fuss.
7. We are black
   We are white
   We are mothers
   We are sisters
   We are wives
   We are women
   No matter the plight
   We are women
   Don't give up the fight
8. Growing up can be frustrating and unfulfilling especially when you're trying to live up to others' expectations.

9. Sharing a good laugh everyday is an exercise that has no price tag. Keep on laughing, keep on smiling.

B - Bright
O - Outgoing
Y - Yearn
S - Smart

G - Gentle
I - Intense
R - Romantic
L - Leaders
S - Sensible

M - Macho
E - Earnest
N - Neutral

Y - Young
O - Opinionated
U - Unpredictable
T - Temperamental
H - Hopeful

W - Warm
O - Open
M - Mothers
E - Essence
N - Nurturing

THE WEATHER

Adrienne Lebron

It's funny, but last week outside was so beautiful, I was saying, "Good. No more snow." And now look outside, "Terrible!" Terrible because it was freezing outside and raining a little bit. This morning I went to school with my daughter and she told me, "I can't see." I started to laugh and told her that I can't see either, so she told me, "Why?" I told her because it's foggy all over the place.

I was waiting for the bus, and it was so cold. I was thinking of going back and going to sleep and not coming to school today. So I told my daughter, "Let's go to the room." She said, "No," and that she wants to go to school. She likes school a lot because in our room she is always alone playing and with me she sometimes feels bored. And here she is in school learning songs. She loves school. I'm listening to the teacher teaching the children. I laugh because I can hear my daughter and I have to hear her when we get to the house. She always sings to me, "Pollito Chicken." Maybe in the future she is going to be a good singer.

She is getting so big, she's my only baby. I love her so much. I don't want her to get big. "My fat girl." I'm waiting to finish class to go to her classroom and kiss her, hug her, and tell her, "Herica, what song did you learn today?"

TO YOU, PUERTO RICO, MY LOVE

Adrienne Lebron

It is so sad, thinking that I'm going to leave you, my beautiful land of Puerto Rico. How much I love you! Wait for me, please, until I come back—no matter what year or what month or time. I hope you don't feel jealous because I'm leaving for one of your best friends, the United States. I'm going to miss you. But I'm coming back one of these days so we can be together forever. I hope to see you soon; and you'll be beautiful like always. I'm going to keep you in my mind forever.

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MY WORK EXPERIENCE IN BOSTON

Rita Lopes

When I came to Boston I was working in a restaurant called Anthony's Pier Four. I worked hard there. On the weekend I was glad because I had my check. I worked busing tables. I did something wrong because I didn't know what to do. I didn't do anything good. I felt sad because I didn't understand English well but now understand English better. Now I feel better because I understand English. I have a lot of friends in Boston. I like Boston because I see a lot of wonderful things. I learn a lot of things day by day. I like Mujeres Unidas because they teach me a lot of English. I live by myself with my two children. I pay my rent every month. I don't have problems now.

IT'S HARD TO STAY IN SCHOOL

Isobel Matias

I have been in the United States of America for almost 28 years. During this time, I have faced many problems. It always seems there is something to conquer, something to resolve. I try very hard to study my lessons; but some new problems always seem to come up. This is the story of my life. Solve one problem, and another one comes up!

Last year, my son stopped going to school. I will have to return to Mexico to help him get back into school. I feel upset because I do not know when I will come back to the United States. I am going to have to miss my class, and this will make me go backwards on my study of English. But my son needs me. He is very young, and he needs my help. I ask my Lord to give me courage, strength, and patience.

I have to say that writing about this part of my life helps me to feel better about myself. Sharing this problem of my life with others gives me a kind of relief.

LEARNING THE TRUTH

Omar Munera

When I came here, everything was wonderful because I didn't know the truth. But two or three months later, I saw everything totally differently. When I started to work at Friday's Restaurant, I had bad experiences. When people came to me looking for something, my answers always were, "I don't know," or "I no speak English." I only knew how to say to women, "Hey, honey."

Another bad experience was when they fired me. The manager had to get an interpreter to talk with me about my mistake. When the interpreter said to me, "You are fired," I felt worried and depressed because I earned good money at my job.

Anyway, I continued on my way until I found the Brisas job. But there I had bad experiences too, because when I started to work there I didn't know anything. I didn't want people to know that I couldn't speak English because some people make fun and bother me. So I got the idea to come to the Cardinal Cushing Center to learn English.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Pearl Thompson

If I could change the system, this is what I would do. First I would insist that kids today would stay in school, learn a trade, or go to work, like the good old days. Most of all, parents and teachers would work together, to discipline children instead of telling teachers not to do this or you can't do that. After all, teachers are parents while your child is in their care.

Police would get involved. No hanging around when you should be in school. I think if we had some of the good old times' laws on our side today, it would stick to the ribs, like corn bread and greens. Who knows? Maybe we wouldn't have to build so many jails or mental institutions.

What I am trying to say is, let us get together and work together, side by side, and stop acting like little scared hermits, afraid of tomorrow with each one for himself. We should give this land its real beauty—out of many, one people.

OUTER EXPERIENCE

Zonia Toledo

It all happened when I was just a young girl of 9 years old. I can remember walking to school on a nice warm day. I knew I was late, so I took my time getting there. As I was walking through the playground, which no one was around, I looked up at the sun and felt so scared. The sun seemed to be getting closer and closer. I thought it was coming down on me, so I laid myself down on the ground with my hands covering my face. I waited awhile and looked up and the sun was its normal size again. It felt so good that nothing happened. But as the day went on I had a high fever. The school had to send me home because of it being so high, 102 degrees. When I got home, the fever just vanished like it never happened.

Meanwhile two days later, I was playing in the playground, and there was this guy, dressed in a suit and tie with a professional camera taking pictures of the cracked cement on the ground. It was about 15 yards from where I felt the sun was falling on me. I thought to myself this is kind of strange for someone to take pictures of cracked cement on the ground, so as nosy as I am, I asked this man why are you taking pictures of this cement. Well being 9 years old he said its none of your concern. As a young kid I went on through the day playing like nothing has happened.

There was this time that I can remember of me being in a small white hallway room, on a hospital bed with a white sheet covering me up to my neck. There was this person dressed in all white clothing. I couldn't see well for I didn't have my glasses on, so as we were waiting for this white door to open that was in front of us, this other white door that was about 3 yards away from the same wall towards my right side, opened side ways and you might say a doctor in a white hospital bed with a white sheet covering only her upper and lower legs. I barely could see who it was, but when I looked at her top stomach, I asked the person that was with me, why they cut her whole top stomach off? He or she replied, her stomach was too big. And that's all I can remember. This could have been a dream or it could have really happened.

BEING A FOSTER MOTHER

Vivian Torres

I am writing a few lines about myself as a foster mother to my grand niece. Her name was Samantha. She was so beautiful to have around. Samantha is no longer with us but she will always be remembered by all of us who loved her very much. She passed away on Dec. 15, 1989 when she was only eight months old. She was born a very sickly baby because her mother was doing drugs.

When the baby was born her mother didn't care about her. She left her in the hospital and didn't go to see her. My sister and I were the only ones who cared about her very much.

At times just being with her was very stressful for me but my love for her kept me going. There were times when I looked at the little smile on her face I got the impression she was speaking to me.

I was so happy even though there was a lot of pain. She made me feel better. I was glad to be there for her when she needed me. I really loved Samantha even though she was not my baby. I loved her as if she were mine.

If you are pregnant please take care of yourself and the baby, and don't use drugs.

NEED I SAY MORE

A magazine of adult student writings

Volume III, Number 1
Winter 1990

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The cover for this issue is a painting done by Anne Brink, entitled "Reading." Anne Brink is a former teacher at the Community Learning Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHING FOR LITERACY PROJECT

The purpose of *Need I Say More* and the Publishing for Literacy Project is to encourage new adult writers to write and new adult readers to read. For us to be successful in this mission, students in adult literacy programs must receive the support needed for them to write about their own lives, their own realities, in an open, honest and heartfelt way. The project's Advisory Committee, Editorial Committee, and staff have therefore agreed that writers need to be given the widest possible freedom regarding content and language consistent with the audience and purpose of this magazine. Consequently, not every piece of writing included here will please every reader—indeed, some readers may find some pieces disturbing—but such is the nature of writing and reading, of publishing and literacy, and we are grateful to our readers for their understanding. Of course, the writings included here are the thoughts and words of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the project's sponsors or funders.

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PREFACE

We would like to point to several aspects of this issue which we feel indicate the continuing growth of *Need I Say More*. Many of the pieces in this issue touch deep personal experiences which have not been written about in previous issues. The fact that the writers are sharing them in such a public manner represents an important step in their personal development. The experiences of Cicely Forde and Delfina Rentas are both highly personal and sensitive. Yet, they had no reservation about sharing their experience with the readers of *Need I Say More*. They said that even though the pieces were originally written with no intention of publication, they felt an urge to share their experience with others.

In her poems, "Who am I?", "In My Own Silence," and "Therapy," Barbara Shelley allows her readers to enter her personal world of an apparently calm surface which is bombarded in steady waves of emotion on the verge of erupting with volcanic proportions. Trapped inside of her soul by a prolonged insensitivity of her childhood world, including people who should have shown love and understanding for a young child just beginning the tumultuous adventure of growing up, the rumbling beneath provides her writing with a rare vitality that is transmitted to her readers. In her pieces, Barbara Shelley is "piercing. . .the darkness (that) has swallowed me" and is "Taking a Stand!".

Before you put this volume down, you must read Young Charles Cox, Jr.'s "The Boy and the Tiger." It is an adventure that appeals not only to children, but to adults as well. The way he tells the story forces the reader to see, hear, and feel the same things that little Essmel saw, heard and felt as he faced the ferocious tiger. In a less dramatic but equally powerful story, Adrienne Lebron's "Bad Sunday" will surely bring tears of joy and sadness to readers. Its delicate narrative flow enforces the feeling of powerlessness and the sense of loss which runs through the story. Through this little girl's loss of a real friend, the death of her pet kitten, she learns a valuable lesson that introduces her to coping with death, even at this tender age. At the end of the story, the relationship between the girl and her mother broadens into a beautiful friendship born out of adversity. We hope that you will enjoy reading this volume as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

Let us remind you that we are always anxious to receive written comments from our readers. They help us in planning future issues of the magazine. Please send your comments to:

Publishing for Literacy
Adult Literacy Resource Institute
c/o Brookline Public Library
361 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02146

PART I

PROSE

A VISIT TO BOSTON'S MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

By Michelet Auguste

In June, I went to the Museum of Fine Arts with people from WAITT House. It was a beautiful experience because of the beautiful things people made with their imagination, called art. There were welcoming people, and the atmosphere was very agreeable. There is security to protect the items in the museum in case of burglaries. There are volunteers who arrange flowers for the lobby of the museum to make the place as beautiful as a paradise, and guides to explain the exhibits to visitors. I was fascinated to see the gold collection, the mural on the ceiling, the Egyptian mummies, and American and French furniture.

Another thing that interested me was the way the artist, Copley, handled the portrait of George Washington. I enjoyed the Cezanne collection too. There are musical instruments, Chinese porcelain and the largest collection of Asian art in the Western World.

The Museum of Fine Arts is a place I recommend to people so they can see what the mind of the human can do.

THE NIGHT OF MOTHER'S DEATH

By Jo Ann Banks

The night my mother died my Grandmother brought home that little tiny baby. He was so little. And my aunt had to breast feed it. But she couldn't feed it for long because she had her own baby to feed. So my grandmother let the baby stay with another aunt until my mother's funeral. The day of the funeral my father sent me and my sisters to get our hair done. When we got back, there was a house full of people dressed in black and they dressed us up in white. Then, a long black hearse came to the house and my grandmother began to cry. I saw her crying and I began to cry. So my cousin said to me, "If you stop crying you can ride with Aunt Dallie. But if you don't stop crying, you will have to go with grandmother."

My Grandmother kept on crying and I kept on crying until we got to the church. A child six years old didn't know what was going on. So when they came to get me to see my mother for the last time, they realized that I was sick and they took me to the doctor. I didn't remember anything else until they put me across her grave.

MY GRANDFATHER

By Norma Barbosa

My grandparents lived in the country. They had a farm before I was born. My mother told me that they had fruit trees, vegetables, and coffee trees. They picked coffee to sell in the city. In the country, they had a river that surrounded the farm.

When my grandmother died, my grandfather sold his farm and came to live in the city. But in the city my grandfather didn't find work. The money was finished. My mother and brother got work in a textile factory.

Then my grandfather bought merchandise and put it in a little cart. He went up and down the street, selling. That is the way he raised his family, while the oldest children continued to work in the factory.

When all his children got married, he bought a little house near a river and didn't work. He dedicated his solitary life to going to church and other religious activities. At that time I was twelve years old.

My grandfather loved me very much and I loved him, too. I was the one who brought his food and washed his handkerchief. One day, a storm named Santa Clara passed through Puerto Rico. It was very strong, and the little house of my grandfather rolled down the river. My grandfather suffered a lot and got very sick.

The night he died, before the moment, he called for me to give him a drink of water. When I helped him get up, he felt very heavy. Later that night, he died.

THE BOY AND THE TIGER

By Young Charles Cox, Jr.

Once upon a time, there was a little Indian boy named Essmel. And he was a native of the Jowobe people. The Jowobe was a tribe of Indian people that lived high up in the plain fields of India where keeping cattle was a part of their lives. Every morning Essmel, like all the rest of the Indian boys, would rise with the sun, and start out on a day's work. Feeding and rounding up stray cows and their young ones, and also protecting them from wild animals was their work. The cows in India are sacred. They are also worshipped as gods. People stop to let the cows cross the streets. Even when they are driving, the cars stop because cows have the right of way.

Essmel was thirteen years old on this day. A hot and beautiful day it was. No clouds. You could see everything clearly from miles away. But on this day, all Essmel wanted was to rest under a tree, or play in the fields. So he did, sneaking away from the other boys and the herd. "Oh boy!" he thought to himself. "I am free." As he played so peacefully by himself, he noticed a tiger had come upon the herd and they were in danger. Essmel stood there in shock not knowing what to do. "O my God!" he said. "I must help. I must!" He looked around to find his staff.

"Where is it?" he said.

"I can't find it. Oh no, wait! My sling shot. I'll use that," he said. Reaching down for a stone to make the shot, there was none. He started looking around. And there, beyond some trees, was a stone; a perfect stone. He grabbed it and put it in his garment, and started to run down the field toward the herd, yelling and screaming. As he approached the herd, he stopped and stood there frozen, looking right at the tiger.

He knew he had only one shot and it'd better be good. As the tiger turned toward him to leap for the kill, Essmel could see the fury in his eyes. So he reached for the stone and slipped it in the sling shot. As he was shaking, he pulled back the rubber band on the sling shot as far as he could and aimed it straight at the tiger's forehead with all his might. And "shoooooch" it went as the tiger leaped. Dead center, the stone landed. As the tiger fell dead, not far from his feet, a great peace and silence fell as the boys looked on in amazement at what happened. "Essmel, Essmel," they cried out. "What a shot! He is dead. You killed the tiger. The great one. The most feared and hated by everyone," they yelled. And when all the townspeople heard of what Essmel did, they came out to see, and be a witness to what had happened. The townspeople took the tiger and hung it up high on two poles, so everyone could see it. They all shouted "Essmel! Essmel!" as they danced and celebrated the death of the great tiger.

COMING TO THE USA

By Fabio

On my way to this country, I had many problems because I didn't have papers. I had to fly through three countries: Panama, Guatemala, and Mexico. When I was in Mexico, I had many difficulties because people on the street stole my money. They knew I had money to come to the USA, and they stole two thousand dollars. The police in Mexico struck me and hurt me. I spent three days sleeping in the street. I didn't have money. I only had fear and hunger.

I felt worried at that moment, but I went to the telephone office and said, "I would like to make a long-distance collect call." I spoke with my friend, and, in one hour he sent money from Boston through Western Union. I received the money and bought a ticket from Mexico City to Tijuana. In Tijuana, they stole money again and arrested me for one day. I felt very disappointed, but this time they stole only three hundred dollars and I had more money. So the next day, I went to a small hotel to find a person with experience to take me to San Diego. I crossed the border in a taxi fixed to carry three people under the hood, around the motor. In San Diego, I bought a ticket to Boston.

A FRIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE

By Cicely Forde

My first experience with death was July 27, 1977. I was almost killed by my husband. It was on a hot summer night. The temperature was about 100 degrees. My husband and I were lying in bed talking, when he got this phone call from one of his lady friends. He used the phone in the other room. After their conversation, he came back inside and began speaking to me. I answered him; but then he got very angry with me. Suddenly, he began hitting me. My eyes were badly damaged. He also hurt my left shoulder.

After he stopped beating me, I went into the bathroom to wash my face. He came behind me, opened the cold water faucet, and pushed me inside. Then he stood looking at me. I felt a little chill, but was afraid to say anything. A feeling came over me as if I were going to pass out. I prayed and asked my God to take care of my two sons. For awhile, the fighting stopped. I thought everything would be all right. But I was wrong. It started all over again.

This time, I was asleep when my husband came from work about 8:00 P.M. that night. In my sleep, I felt as if someone came to me and said, "Wake up." I got up and sat at the end of the bed. A little while after, my husband came up the stairs into the bedroom and began fussing with me. I didn't answer him this time.

He said to me, "This hammer I have in my hand, I am going to destroy something that you have."
"What are you talking about?" I said to him.
"You will see in time," he said.

Without any warning, my husband hit me on the head with his palm. When I turned to pick up my pocketbook to go into my kids' room, he told me not to make any noise, but to lie still. While he was raging, I tried to sneak down the stairs towards the front door. He noticed I was not lying on the floor beneath his feet but running down the stairs.

He threw the hammer at me and it caught me in my back, near my kidneys. I turned around, looked at him, then I said, "You did me this?" My eldest son ran out from a room down stairs towards the door. He said to my son, "If you try and open the door, I will throw this hammer at you too." Hearing this, I screamed to my son to move away from the door. I went into the kitchen, and my husband followed me there. He pulled out the cabinet drawer to get a knife to kill me. But God is always there when we need him. This is why we have to pray all the time because he helps a lot. I left the kitchen, went back up to bed but couldn't sleep because of the pain I was in. So I prayed for morning to come quickly. I got up and had my shower. I got dressed, pretending I was going to work. I gave the kids a sign to inform them that I would be back right away, that I was not going to work.

I found a phone and called my husband's friend. I told him everything. He told me not to go back into the house, but to wait for him. When we got to the house, his friend asked him, "Are you crazy? What is wrong with you? Do you want to go to jail? Do you know what you have done to your wife?" He could not answer his friend.

When his friend was leaving, I left the house. I spent six days in the hospital. When I was released from the hospital, I went into a home for battered women. I am alive. I think I am alive because I prayed. Prayer is the key to everything. I had faith that one day the Lord would release me from the fear and pain and he has done just that for me.

JAPANESE FOOD IN AMERICA

Mayumi Hairston

I chose to write about Japanese food because it is a part of my culture. I am half Japanese and half Black American. As a child, I remember eating Japanese food, and it was a special thing when my mother cooked or prepared Japanese food. My brothers and sisters and I would sit at the table, and our mouths would be watering waiting for that special dish to be served.

I have always been fascinated by Japanese food. The fish is so fresh. It is often eaten raw. The vegetables are so perfectly and lightly fried, steamed or grilled.

I like that the dishes are served with a simplicity that permits us to taste the flavors and experience tastes. It is the way it looks, tastes and is served that attracts me as an eater. The size of the Japanese portions is something that I find inviting.

In America we are mostly a meat and potatoes people. Recently, however, changes have been occurring in our eating habits. Important numbers of people are seriously concerned over the nutritional problems of a high fat diet. Nutritional concerns even penetrated the culinary bastions of haute cuisine with the result that the traditional French chef's pride, the rich, butter-laden sauce, is no longer welcome.

My favorite type of Japanese dish is tempura. Tempura is fried shrimp, string beans and clam pieces dipped in batter and fried. Another dish which is well known is sushi. It is raw fish and rice wrapped in seaweed.

I also like going to Japanese restaurants to have dinner. One Japanese restaurant is called Kyoto and is on Huntington Avenue in Boston. What I like most is that the waitresses are dressed in beautiful kimonos. You have a choice of either sitting at the table or on the floor area. The floor area is very cozy and traditional.

The Japanese have contributed many other things to the United States, such as technological equipment and automobiles. I think the best is their food. That is what I enjoy the most.

SINGLE PARENTING CAN BE DIFFICULT

By Maritza Hernandez

The majority of women in today's world find it very hard to do the job of two parents. When a man or a woman of today's world has a child things change. For example, feelings change. The woman feels that the child is taking up a lot of her time. From the man's point of view, he feels like the woman is tying him down. Therefore, a single parent has a lot of different feelings.

Being a single parent at a young age is even more difficult. I had my first child at a young age. At that time I couldn't go out because no one wanted to babysit. Sometimes I had to stay home from school. When my daughter was sick my mother didn't want to help me. Being a single parent at a young age has been hard for me. So just to take some of the problems away, I started using drugs. From my point of view and from society's point of view, single parenting is an extremely hard job.

MOTHERHOOD

By Maritza Hernandez

When I get up in the morning, I get my daughters up very early so that they can get dressed and still have time to eat breakfast. When I go to my baby's room and look into her crib and she smiles at me, she makes me feel very happy to have beautiful children. I love when my two daughters come from school and they want me to help them with their schoolwork. It makes me feel very happy to know that they can count on me. Before I had my children I was working and all my money I would spend it on me. But now that I have my life I love them and I will do anything for them.

PEOPLE'S FEARS

By Carolyn Justice

Fear has become an ever increasing problem among people. People fear for their lives in the community and sadly even at work. Some fear their neighbors, friends, relatives. Some even fear their own children. It has become so frightening that children are afraid to go to school. These problems are being blamed on the increase of drug activity—both the selling and the buying of drugs. Drug and alcohol addiction is another factor. Some say, it's where you live, your environment. Is it because the police or drug enforcement agencies are unable to deal with this grave, growing problem? Or is it the continuous deadly violence connected with these activities? It is not just among the adults any more. Turn on the T.V., listen to the radio and read the paper. The victims are getting younger. They are boys and girls. Among the youth, it's being blamed on gang wars and turf control. How many of them have become the dealers? Are these the real problems? Has the fear of these problems itself reached such an epidemic level that to really take a serious look at the problems would and should demand immediate action? To do this will only escalate the fear among communities and people. It becomes easier to hide behind those safely locked doors. Then the next question that surfaces is are we really safe? Fearing to go to work, school, or outside is an overwhelming stress factor for any individual, young or old.

Imagine anyone in constant fear of his safety, both away and in his community. It's like being on a curfew you are forced to set. The fear and frustration has to be overwhelming at times. I see, hear and feel the fear in the people. I can feel it, I can feel it, I feel the anger swell within me. I begin to choke, I want to yell and scream! Doesn't anyone see or feel what I'm feeling? Have we as adults encouraged our children to want or need the luxuries or material goods we cannot afford? Have we forgotten the values of "self" they so badly need? Stop the fear, the violence, and yes, the ignorance and the lack of communication so many of us are beginning to adjust to so easily. Yes, I see it, I feel it and I hate it. If I ever get the chance to speak about it, or do something about it, I will. I'm not out to change the world. I just want to keep reality a reality, if not for the adults, then for the generations to come. Sometimes, we as adults tend to forget that the children, the youth of today are not as sheltered, blind or ignorant as we think they are or as we were raised to be. Let's not let the children or youth feel they have to fight these battles alone. As the saying goes, "There's no place like home."

SAD SUNDAY

By Adrienne Labron

It was a happy morning. My daughter, Herica, and I were up early. We did what we usually do in the morning. I made breakfast and we ate. Herica asked me, "Mom, where is Silver? I'm going to feed her." Silver is her kitty. She is a beautiful kitty with beautiful gray hair. I told her, "She is out walking with her boyfriend." But one hour passed and Silver didn't scratch our door for us to open it for her. And my daughter was impatient. She said to me, "Let's go out and look for her." I told her, "ok." I put her shoes on and we left. "I don't see the kitty," I told my daughter. My daughter insisted that we go to the other street to see if she was there with her boyfriend. So we went. I didn't see anything. But my daughter jumped and started to scream. "My kitty! My kitty! Silver! Silver!" Poor Silver. What a sad Sunday for us. She was lying down near the sidewalk dead. My daughter was in shock. She tried to grab the kitty to cure her. I told her, "We can't. She is dead." She cried so much that I started to cry too. I don't like to see my daughter sad.

I went to a store near my house where there lived an old lady. I told her that our cat had died, and my daughter was crying. I begged her that when her cat had kitties to please give one to my daughter. She told me to take one. She already had kittens. I saw a black kitty and started to cry because the other one was so beautiful, all gray. I think I also was in shock. My daughter took the cat. We went home. My daughter was still crying. I told her, "You got a new kitty. Why are you crying?" She told me, "Because I want Silver." I hugged her and told her, "She is in heaven like grandma. Don't cry."

That night we went to the store, and I opened the door of the basement. I saw Silver's boyfriend and my daughter looked at the cat. We both started to cry. And do you know something? My daughter spoke to the cat about everything that happened to Silver and I started to laugh. She was so funny. I thought for a moment that she was crazy or something. And I told her "Herica, you know something? I love you." And she started to laugh. And we laughed together.

VALENTINES DAY

By Helen Lemieux

Tuesday the 14th was Valentines Day. It was a special day for me. The class and I went on a field trip to the African Meeting House. It was a very special thing that we saw and talked about. It was about black women from the 1800's to the 1920's. The black women went through a lot of hard times but nothing stopped them. It made them strong and powerful and their struggle for freedom just to be women meant a lot to them. They worked to be free from slavery to help others like them to be free. When I speak about women, I don't mean just black women, but all colors and kinds of women. It is still slavery for those who have to work and take care of their children. It is still slavery when you have to cook for them, wash their clothes and see that they're in bed on time and a whole lot of other things you have to do just because you're a woman. Most women don't have an education. Their jobs don't pay much and with what little they do get, they have to do the best that they can. Some men are so used to women doing things for them, that they begin to think that all women are alike. But it's not so. I understand that men are used to women waiting on them. It starts from their mothers waiting on them and their sisters and wives also. It is very hard for a woman just to be a woman. I mean all kinds and all colors. We are still slaves—even to ourselves.

A FRIEND

By Chester Lewis

My friend made me think of the kind of woman Harriet Tubman was. He was a weightlifter. His name was Bill Foster. He was all muscles. I met him by pressing iron. He was the first big dude I ever met with big muscles.

He used to take me over to his house when we worked out with iron. I was the smallest one there. There were four of us and they were like Hercules. My dream was to be like them.

As I started to develop, I went to Job Corps. I got into another trade, boxing. The doctors wouldn't let me box though because I had a scar under my eye and it wouldn't heal. After the scar healed, the doctor said it might be dangerous for me to box because I was hit in the cheekbone.

I went on to take my trade, heavy equipment. I did it for six months. My reason for leaving Job Corps was they wouldn't let me box. I went back two other times and they wouldn't let me box.

Bill Foster made me want to work out. He would say to me, "Just look at me. Some day you'll be like me." Bill Foster gave me courage to go on.

MY NEW LIFE IN AMERICA

By Elizabeth Lopes

It was my dream a long time ago to see America someday. On August 7, 1976, I first came to Boston. Every story I heard about this country in my mind was beautiful. But I forgot that everything can't be roses at the same time. My brother went to the airport to meet me. It was nighttime. The next day, early in the morning, I woke up and looked out of the window. I saw a different picture than I had expected before. Then I asked my brother, "This is the famous America I heard about?" Everything was dark for me because I couldn't understand. I had many problems. I always had to depend on someone else because the language was a problem. But when I started going to school, and learning something, it is different now. I always love America. It is the best country in the world. I like the freedom and possibility we have here that we don't have in our country, or in others in the world.

MY FAMILY

By Omar Munera

My grandparents lived in Don Matias town, in Colombia. I'm going to tell you all their story. I didn't know my mother's parents because they died before I was born. Of my father's parents, there is just one alive. My father's mother died last year in November. But my father's father is living in Don Matias town with three daughters.

My parents live in the country on a big farm. My mother has an income from lulo (a fruit you can't find in the U.S.) and tree tomatoes. My mother has to pick lulos and tree tomatoes every week to send to town, and she goes every Sunday to get the money. She also has to take care of the children. That's hard but she had been doing it for a long time.

My father milks the cows and feeds the animals. He too has been doing it for a long time. The people of our country are trained to work very hard. But sometimes my father has to get help, so he pays workers to help him.

My mother's income is to buy things for the house or to pay for my sister's education. The same happens with the money that my father gets from the milk and animals that he sells.

I miss the farm because the life on the farm is very calm. There is no noise, air pollution, drugs, violence. The life there is wonderful.

MY VISIT TO THE KENNEDY MUSEUM

By Mennel Phillips

On the 23rd of June, I went to visit the Kennedy Museum. What impressed me the most was the size of the museum and how clean it was. We were first shown a film of J. F. Kennedy's life from 1917-1963. This lasted for 30 minutes. Following the end of the film, we went to the exhibition area. Here I heard the recorded voice of Mrs. Rose Kennedy giving us a brief history of the family background.

What I enjoyed the most were the exhibits that gave me the opportunity to learn more about the President's personality. He was a happy person who loved music, and as a result, music was played in the White House at all times when he was there.

What I least enjoyed was not having a guide to explain anything. I was on my own throughout the exhibition.

THE DRIVE TO WIN

By Gardenia Pratt and Audrey Young

Donna Bell, Mayumi Hairston, Costella Jones, Gardenia Pratt and Audrey Young received their high school diplomas at Boston English High School. Since Gardenia and Audrey were the first participants to graduate using the newly revised External Diploma Program curriculum, they were asked to represent all the Adult Literacy Initiative graduates and to write a speech for the occasion. Gardenia and Audrey wrote this speech, which Audrey delivered at the graduation ceremony.

I came to WAITT House after hearing about it in my neighborhood. I started coming to school to fulfill my dream of being a high school graduate. I have three children, and I wanted to set an example for them about how important it is to finish school. It is great that there are community-based organizations that are open for people to be able to go back and finish school. Without them there would be no hope.

As a participant of an adult literacy program I found it a challenge and a great experience working towards my high school diploma. I learned a lot, like the different aspects of our government and problems that exist in our environment.

Being a participant in an adult literacy program means discovering your hopes and dreams of reaching your goals of success in the future. It can mean rebuilding one of life's dreams of earning a high school diploma.

I would like to thank all the staff of the adult literacy programs for helping dreams come true. They put us on the right track of finding the goals that we would like to achieve. I felt very comfortable at WAITT House and enjoyed being there every day. If you missed a day, you missed a lot.

In closing, I would like for you to remember that if you have a dream – keep it alive as we have. Don't stop until you have reached your goals.

MY PUERTO RICAN HERITAGE

By Gladys Roman

Although I was born in the United States, I am proud of my Puerto Rican heritage. My parents came from Puerto Rico thirty-eight years ago, and they raised fourteen children here in the United States. The language they spoke to us at home was Spanish. Raising fourteen children is a hard task. My father worked hard as a construction worker, and as far as I can remember, he was never out of a job.

Although we were raised in New York, we inherited much of the culture of our parents. We inherited their language, religion and other customs, such as the way we celebrate festivities and holidays, the food we eat and our sense of family and community unity.

When the holidays came, there were always plenty of foods for us to eat. Christmas wasn't Christmas without "turon," or nougat, as it is called in English, and "arroz con gandules," which is rice with green bananas and meat. I sounds simple to prepare, but it's not. While the grownups are in the kitchen preparing this dish, the Christmas music is on, and the children are playing and dancing to the sound of the music.

My parents used to take all morning and afternoon preparing the Christmas dinner. Our aunts and uncles would all come with their children to visit on this special day. My house was full with joy and laughter.

When my parents first came to New York from Puerto Rico, there weren't a lot of Spanish restaurants, so they always cooked at home. As the years went by, my father saw a sign on a restaurant one day, which said "Spanish food." He went in and ordered a meal, but he said it wasn't as good as his cooking.

One day he went back and asked the owner for a job as a cook. The owner hired him. My father is a great cook. When he started working in the restaurant, only Spanish-speaking people came in to eat. As the months went by, however, all types of people went in to try the food. They liked it because they came back.

My father enjoyed his job because he enjoyed cooking Puerto Rican food for all types of American people. Today in the United States there are many restaurants that serve Puerto Rican food.

THE STRONG MOTHERS

By Delfina Rentas

When you have a family, you have a responsibility because that is a promise that you made. When the children go to school, the mother has most likely to try to help in whatever they want. I, as a mother, have a responsibility to steer them in the right direction.

I have a big problem with my son because he is very strong and impulsive. I need more energy and capacity to deal with him. When I am going to the hospital, I feel very bad because if one doesn't speak English very well, one has to wait in line a long time.

Life is very hard in this society because one doesn't belong in this country. People discriminate and are ignorant. The friends are not as sincere as you expect.

Life in this country is made even more difficult when one's husband is not helpful. In my case, I feel my husband is confused. When he doesn't drink, he is a very nice person. When he drinks, he becomes the opposite person. These reasons make me feel like a strong woman. But for other reasons, I feel the desire to let go and leave.

I think that I'm a strong woman and let go. But I think about my role as a mother before anything else.

Maybe I don't express myself well in English. But I know you understand what I am saying.

WOOLMAN HILL

By Pearl Thompson

A place where one can really be at one with Nature is where I went to a conference at Woolman Hill, Western Massachusetts. My colleagues and I from the Publishing for Literacy Project of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute and Brookline Library went to Woolman Hill.

We stayed in a cabin that housed 30 people. The place was breathtaking. We were surrounded by lots of beautiful scenery, fresh air, peace and quiet. Only the sound of hunters once in a while in the woods could be heard. The river and springs were so delightful. We even had some time to go hiking on the mountain. Of course the weekend wouldn't be complete without that hike we took. It was refreshing. It made me feel like a kid again.

The next day I got up very lonely and went for a walk while the others were asleep. As I walked in the soft dew on the grass, it felt so good. I just had to wash my face with it. I came back to the cabin, showered, changed, and was ready for the events of the day.

I even visited some of the neighbors who were so nice to us showing and telling us things about farm life. Of course, I knew some of the things, since in Jamaica where I lived, I too grew up on a farm. We had a lot of things but a solar oven was not one of those things. We cooked outdoors at times, but with fire wood, depending on the meal that was being prepared. Well, I was really amazed at the solar oven at Woolman Hill since it was my first time seeing one. It was really a neat experience for me. So if you would like some peace and quiet, Woolman Hill is a good place to go.

BEING A FOSTER MOTHER

By Vivian Torres

I am writing a few lines about myself as a foster mother to my grand niece. Her name was Samantha. She was so beautiful to have around. Samantha is no longer with us but she will always be remembered by all of us who loved her very much. She passed away December 15, 1989, when she was only eight months old. She was born a very sickly baby because her mother was doing drugs.

When the baby was born her mother didn't care about her. She left her in the hospital and didn't go to see her. My sister and I were the only ones who cared about her very much.

At times just being with her was very stressful for me but my love for her kept me going. There were times, when I looked at the little smile on her face, I got the impression she was speaking to me.

I was so happy even though there was a lot of pain. She made me feel better. I was so happy to be there for her when she needed me. I really loved Samantha even though she was not my baby. I loved her as if she were mine.

If you are pregnant, please take care of yourself and the baby, and don't use drugs.

PART II

POETRY

ANOTHER LIFE GONE

By Jo Ann Banks

This young man was here last night;
Today he is gone.
What for I don't know.
A precious life is gone,
And left his family behind.
I didn't know this young man;
But I met him once.
I know his children.
They are some nice children.
Life doesn't mean anything to some people.
They can take your life just like that.
Shot through the head, two times.
That is so.

POEMS

By Ada Cherry

Poems are the pit,
of a sense of great imagination
It gives affection to the heart
mind, body and soul!!!
soul
body
and mind

HOMELESSNESS

By Ada Cherry

It makes you feel so lost in life.
It makes your mind go round and round.
You have so many wonders;
Wondering if you'll ever find a home,
It is a scary feeling.
It is like a knife stuck in your back;
When you are homeless it's not the end.
There is someone out there who really cares;
but when you are homeless you think no one cares.

CHILDREN

By Lilia Coofu

Children are born
Children learn
Children care
Children beware
Children grow, before you know
Leaving the world of games and play.
Children need guidance, love and
instruction,
Easing into a life, sometimes filled
with destruction.
Parents laugh, cry, love, worry and
support.
The years pass by fast and fleeting;
No matter what age;
infants, toddlers, preteens, teens or adults,
Children continue to lean on, to need,
to care,
Parents continue to love, to support, to worry,
and to beware.

FLOWERS!

By Henry Graves

Flowers are a little like
The ladies of the world.
They grow weeds
One from good
Earth and the other
From a woman's
Sexy wound.

NATURAL BEAUTY

By Henry Graves

I know this pretty
Lady named Peggy.
Yo, see She doesn't wear lipstick
On her pink lips.
No eye makeup on her
Bright blue eyes.
She is not made up.
She has natural
Beauty from childhood up today.
She has natural beauty.
I wish she could be mine,
But we know it will never be.

WINTER

By Anna Jiminez

Winter sometimes becomes a cold day.
Winter is fun to play in snow.
Winter brings so many memories to me.

Last year, I had great fun playing in the snow.
Football was one of my favorite sports.
What I like the best in football, is that
You get to throw each other in the snow for a touchdown.

I'm going to miss winter this year.
It went by too fast.

All of the kids like to make snowmen.
Playing with snowballs.
It was nice to see,
Because everybody was happy.

Winter will come again
Next year!

LONELINESS

By Anna Jiminez

I became lonely when I had
to run away from home.
Now, I'm away from my family
and never can come back.
I feel so lonely wondering when
am I going to see them again.
I cry at night: my tears roll every
night.
Has it been the last of my dreams
to fall apart.
Or has it just been the beginning
to come apart.
Months, days, weeks have gone by.
I decided to make up my mind.
I'm not running anymore, I changed my mind.
I want to see my family again.
"I'm home again!"

WAKE UP IN THE MORNING

By Cynthia Johnson

I wake up every morning
And look out of the window
And see the sunlight and leaves
Fall on the ground.
I say what a beautiful day.
I thank God for being alive.
And for many more years,
I want to help the people that are sick,
And let them get well.
People don't thank God enough.
It's a whole lot to thank God for to be alive.

WHAT A FEELING

By Cynthia Johnson

One day as I was sitting in the house,
I looked around and said
What a good feeling to be alive
And to wake up every day to see the sunlight.

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FAMILY

By Carolyn Justice

Family is an extension of life.
Being a family because of the parents.
Each person being an individual.
Each seeking their own goals and personal needs.
Sometimes living up to family values and beliefs can cause stress and separation.
Especially when you continue to try to please the family and not yourself.
The family may not realize each person is doing exactly what they want to do.
Be it good or bad.
What may be good for one or two of the family members to do or want to do.
May not be good for you or me.
Sometimes the ties may be cut.
Never the reality of the family.
No matter how bad or good.
You can run and try to hide.
The family will always prevail.

INTO OUR LIVES HE CAME

By Carolyn Justice

Into our lives he came.
So warm and energetic.
He left us the same that night in January.
We should not regret his going.
We should use his spirit as our strength and future growing.
He lived his life to fulfillment.
He enjoyed each and every day.
No one will ever take his place.
He will remain in my heart always.
I still remember him saying, "I'm COOL Guy."
Ray Elliott Justice, you were that and much more.
With everlasting love.

A DREAM FOR THE HUMAN RACE

By Elizabeth A. Kanze

I fall down as a dream is
in my reach.
I get up again to reach for
this dream.
The dream is love and peace
for the human race.
We all must reach for the
dream.
It can be made because life
is all we have.
If we give ourselves a chance
to love, we can love!

LOOK AT THE PERSON

By Elizabeth Kanze

Look at the person.
  See the people.
Look at the person.
  See the colors.
Look at the person.
  See the Religions.
Look at the person.
  See the Art.
Look at the person.
  See the hate.
Look at the person.
  See the Society.
Look at the person.
  See the love.

Just look at the person.

THERAPY

By Barbara Shelley

I feel like I'm pouring salt on the wounds of the past.
I am agonizing once again
Over what was and will never be again.
I do not wish to wear my scars like armor.
Nor do I want to wear the pain of my childhood on my face
Like a mask for Halloween.
I do not wish to blame my mother or my father
But my anger clouds my judgement once again.
I do not wish to see my brother in the shadow of the light,
Over my bed between my sheets.
Invading my space in a time of
Baby dolls and lollipops.
How can I betray the one person
Who rescues me in the darkness of night?
I sit and I think of how the
Daylight has beat my naked body.
And the darkness has swallowed me
Into the piercing yet forgiving night.

WHO AM I

By Barbara Shelley

Today I am Free
Of the chains that bound me.
I have the freedom to fight,
It's my God given right.
I have the freedom to take a stand
For the respect I demand.
Today I am free,
Of the chains that bound me.
I suppose you're wondering who I am.
I am a woman
Taking a stand!

IN MY OWN SILENCE

By Barbara Shelley

I hear the scream of a child,
And the pounding of a fist.
The Anger coming down
And the floor coming up.

I can no longer sit
In my own silence;
and watch the spirit of
a child die.

The child in me soon awakens
(in pain)
and says no more.
I soon move to (the next room)
to speak up for the child who
cannot speak up for himself.
For fear he will lose the love of
his mother.

Today my pain is my motivator.
I am a parent to the child
within me.
I now sit and grieve the painful memories
that are still a part of who
I am.
In my own silence
I slowly let go.

REACH OUT

By Alice Sullivan

Did you ever look in the bottom
of an empty can of beer?
There are no shining stars, no moon,
no sun, no rain.
Only a life of loneliness and a
heart that's full of pain.
You'll find no future there.
It's up to you to take that can and
turn it upside down.
To put a smile upon your face
and wipe away the frown.
Never turn it up again.
Remember where you've been
Just reach out your hand my friend
You will be born again.

MATTIE TO ADA

By Mattie Wheeler

I know you are in pain.
But we must go on.
There are times
We think the world has forgotten us.
We must go on.
Sometimes we can't do anything right.
We must go on.

There are times
Our friends don't understand us.
We cry all night long
And we don't know why.
There is no secret
What God can do.
He can do anything.
Just ask.
We must go on.

Just look around you
And you will see,
There is a light ahead
Just keep going.
There is love everywhere.
Take this tip from me.

Sometimes we can't get it together.
In good times and bad times.
God is by your side.
He is a friend who will never leave you
Believe me.
It is how I feel.
And it is true.
He is a friend who never forsakes you.
We must go on.

STRUGGLE WITH MY LIFE

By Mattie Wheeler

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
a long long ways from home.

I am trying to make it in this old world.
I go to my friends for help.
They don't understand me.
They say they're busy.
They don't have the time for me.
Can someone help me off this merry-go-round of life?

I try to sleep at night
I just think about the things that's going on in my life.
Hard times and heartaches and pain
Is all
I have.
Life is a struggle.
I try to get an education and my money ran out.
I try to get a job, I don't have an education.
They say things will get better.
I have a rabbit foot for good luck;
That rabbit had four and they killed him.
So my luck isn't too good.
Life is a struggle.
Sometimes I think if it wasn't for bad luck,
I wouldn't have no luck at all.

Life is a struggle.
I went out and when I came back,
Someone had robbed my home.
Life is a struggle.
I looked in my pocket
For a quarter;
All I found was lint.

A FRIENDLY TIP

By Mattie Wheeler

There will always be days when your skies are blue.
There will be times when you are all alone.
There will be moments when you feel no one loves you.
There will always be times when you sit by the phone
and no one will ever call.

There will always be sadness
when you heart fills with pain.
All the things you do
Seem to be in vain.

When you feel at a loss,
Trust in a friend like me.
I will always be there when you need me.
What are friends for?

Take this tip. Let's be friends forever.

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Either type your work, or print it out in handwriting, using a pen. This will make it easier for the Editorial Committee to read.

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